TEMPLE BAR

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY."

A London Magazine

FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY READERS.

THE SEVENTIETH VOLUME.

JANUARY TO APRIL 1884.

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JANUARY 1884.

Peril.

By JESSIE FOTHERGILL.

Author of 'The First Violin,' 'With a Kiss,' etc.

PART I.

AT 61, GREAT NORTH STREET.

Chapter I.

PAUL LAWFORD TO MRS. WOODFALL.

"Darkingford, February 18, 18—.

"MY DEAREST KATTY.

On the principle of business first and pleasure afterwards, listen to this: business done by your good-for-nothing brother—none; situations secured by the same, lucrative or otherwise—none; prospects of coming into any such situation—none. Expenses since he last wrote to you, the same as the week before. If that is not taking a negative view of things, I don't know what is. It seems to me that it would be folly to enlarge upon a situation which is so very much like it has been ever since I came to this—I was going to say, cursed town, only there is a folly and a futility about such expressions which revolts me; and at my age a man should have learnt, if not to make money with success, at least to do without it with the nearest approach to equanimity that he can compass. And if there was no one but myself to think of, I don't know that there would be a more contented fellow in England. However, I will not enlarge upon that. I'm here, and on the chance of a chance turning up, here I mean to stop for the present.

"Now that business is done with, let us to the pleasure, and you will open your eyes at the idea of any pleasure existing for me in a place of which I have such an opinion as I have of this.

Have I ever mentioned Hugh Nowell to you, as an acquaintance of mine? I don't feel sure, but I think I must have done, for he is about the only fellow in all this exhilarating town in whom I have been able to get up the semblance of a feeling of interest. I saw him first at his grandfather's office; I had an introduction to one Hankinson, the manager; and I repaired there in search of a clerkship or correspondentship, or anything they would or could give me. I got nothing of the sort, but I made the acquaintance of this young fellow. He's a dark, handsome sort of a lad, quick-tempered, and desperately in earnest about everything—rather a contrast in that way to your humble scribe. I see you wag your head in mournful assent; and you may continue to do so, but hear my tale, I beg. I saw Hugh Nowell, because Hankinson was out, and he was next in authority; despite the differences between us we got talking, and hit it off in some way. He didn't find me a shop, but he came and called upon me, and talked politics, like everyone does here; they are a most combative set. Politics, he informed me, were the joy of his life, and it was quite evident from his way of talking that he really believes it matters something whether you have opinions or not on the question. I pointed out to him what a mistake this is, how very much better off one is if one treats such things with the contempt that is their due. It shocked him very much; we were nearly cutting every tie of friendship, &c.; but then he kindly thought better of it, clothed his mind in a more charitable garment, excused me to himself by the theory that I was not quite all there, and we have been as thick as ever again, since. He has salved over to his own conscience the sin of associating with one who, not being an avowed Radical, must have leanings towards the opposite camp, by making the most persevering and praiseworthy attempts to convert me. He brings me books on his side of the question, and pamphlets, and has good hopes that ultimately I shall lay hold of the saving faith of Radicalism and be healed. It is very nice to see so much enthusiasm; only all his books and all his theories remind me powerfully of the tale I have lately heard about Hugh's own grandfather—a venerable man who has risen from nothing, to be fearfully and stupendously rich. Some one reproached him with having been a Radical when he was young and poor, and having turned Conservative as soon as he was old and rich.

"'Eh! why, it's all the same,' he said. 'Radical, what is Radical? its nought but a Tory 'bout brass.'

"What is more to the point, is that he—Hugh Nowell, I mean—said he would keep a look-out for anything that he

thought might suit me. How old is he? you wonder. I have never asked him, but I should say, about five-and-twenty. And I am thirty-one, and allowing myself to be patronised by a child like this, is what you indignantly think. Wait a little, till you hear the rest of my tale. This Hugh Nowell, to be brief, is in business with his grandfather, a certain old James Nowell, who is a rough diamond if ever there was one, and who owns cotton factories—big ones—on the outskirts of the town: you would be none the wiser if I told you in which quarter, but not in this one where I live.

"When I say Hugh is 'in business' with his venerable relative, I mean, so to speak. The old fellow takes care that he shall not want for hard work, though I don't imagine he has promoted him to any real responsibility, or given him any share in the annual profits yet. That is of little consequence, however. Old James will presently die—ghastly though the idea may be to him, as it is to most old people—and when he does, Master Hugh will be a very rich man. Old James, I may add, is, in addition to his other engaging qualities, a thorough miser. I never saw him till last night, but I had gathered long since, from Hugh's sudden silences and reserves, whenever the discourse wandered anywhere near domestic matters, that his grandfather was not what you would call a nice old gentleman. And this is how I came to see him.

"I had been tramping about all day, or riding on the tops of omnibuses, from one office to another, from this warehouse to that, till my whole head was weary, and my whole heart sick. I wasn't wanted in any of them. A dense fog had come on, too, thick enough to choke a dog. It was well that the darkness descended early, for not the most beautiful woman's face in the world but would have looked green, and blue, and yellow in that atmosphere; while as for us men, the less said of us the better. I got home—*home*, you know—about half-past five, and not having tasted bite or sup since my sumptuous breakfast at eight o'clock in the morning, I commanded my landlady to let me have dinner, and although it consisted of cold shoulder-blade of mutton (I am letting myself down gently into a vegetarian) with bread and potatoes on which to carouse at discretion—or indiscretion—and although I was faint with hunger, yet, you will be astonished to hear, I did not make much of a meal. I got the ghastly-looking *débris* cleared away as soon as I could; drew the curtains—I have mentioned before that they are of green moreen with slits in them; built up a fire without regard to cost—I wonder why lodging-house coals always crumble away into white ashes as soon

as they smell the fire; lighted my pipe, and prepared to get through the evening as well as I could. I had got a book—a novel—and I was curious to see whether any of the characters in it were so uncomfortable in their love quarrels and high-flown troubles as I was in my suburban lodgings and with my mutton bone. I hadn't read two pages before it occurred to me that I would first try to carve a little box for Humphrey, out of a piece of myrtle wood that I possessed. I was just falling to upon the work, and thinking that after all the evening might not seem more than a week long, when I heard a loud ring which I was much too modest to connect in any way with myself, till Mrs. Smirthwaite opened the door and ushered in 'a gentleman.' You know what wild ideas one has when one is so badly off that any change at all must necessarily be for the better. Before the 'gentleman' fairly got into the room, I had time to imagine a whole series of brilliant events, culminating in my being made a partner in one of the richest manufacturing houses in Darkingford. I did not quite lose all hope when I saw who it really was—Hugh Nowell, and he looked as if he were in a hurry.

"'Oh! Lawford——'

"'Nowell—good evening,' I said, dissembling, and looking as if I supposed he had just dropped in to call upon me. 'How are you to-night?'

"'Very well, thanks. I must not sit down. I've come to ask you a favour.'

"'Anything that I can possibly do,' I began blandly, concluding at once that their foreign clerk had been seized with sudden illness or had an accident, and that Nowell had bethought himself of asking me to see them through the emergency.

"'Well! it's just this. I know it's a queer thing to ask, and no great compliment to you, but on an emergency, you know—' (I now was sure it was something of the nature I have described) 'and you must not blame me for my grandfather's caprices.'

"'What the dickens does he mean?' thought I. 'Does old Nowell want me to begin as a doffer, before rising to greater responsibility?' (A doffer, Katty, my dear, is usually a boy, occupying the meanest and most elementary grade amongst the operatives of a factory, essential, like most drudges, and despised like all of them.) I smiled sweetly, and waited to hear more. I was almost ready to take the doffer's place, if it were offered to me.

"'The fact is,' Nowell said, ruffling up his brow, and half-laughing; 'we're having a party to-night—at least, my grandfather is—a kind of dinner-party, half religious and half business,

worldly and other worldly, at the same time; and one man has failed us at the last moment, and——'

"Then I knew; and, Katty, if it had not been that every consideration of decency and manliness, &c., forbade, I could have sat down and groaned with disappointment. I suppose my countenance expressed some of the deep disturbance which was in my soul.

"Nowell saw it, and luckily imputed it to my offended dignity as a man of society, and a diner-out, bless his innocent soul!

"'You must not be offended, Lawford, really. I have wished many a time to ask you to come and spend an evening with us, but I can't ask people. It is not my fault, I assure you, that your first invitation from me comes in such a shape. I can tell you, these big business feeds, given to keep customers in good humour, are anything but enlivening; and all I can say is, that if you will be so good as to come, and fill up this gap, 'tis you who will confer the favour. Would you mind?'

"There is something about the lad that I can't help liking, and his earnestness amuses me. He was nearly as serious about this, as he is about the innate right of a nation to manhood suffrage. And I knew it was perfectly true that he would have asked me long ago if he could. *And*—let me be honest—the word 'dinner' had awakened hopes and desires long dormant, and as I had hoped, dead.

"I waved aside all apologies, so as to put him at his ease, and said:

"'My dear Nowell, make no excuses. We know each other sufficiently well now, I hope, to be able to ask little favours like this of each other. I will go with pleasure, if you will tell me when.'

"'Well, now, if you don't mind—if I may wait while you dress, I'll take you back with me. It is but a stone's throw.'

"This is true. Old Nowell, who scorns the idea of living in anyway up to the income which he has grubbed together so toilsomely, lives not far away from me; only his house is a big one, standing in a broad thoroughfare; my lodging is in a slum leading out of the said thoroughfare.

"I left Nowell to study the splendours of my sitting-room, rushed upstairs, and reviewed my resources. They are somewhat scanty now; still, if you've got any evening toggery at all, you look much the same as another man who could buy up all Poole's shop. In about ten minutes I thought I presented a very respectable appearance."

("Of course you did, you dear old Paul!" reflects Mrs. Woodfall, absorbed in the account, "with your handsome face, and your

yellow hair, and your bonny blue eyes, and your figure like a prince, and feeling so hungry after your mutton bone! Oh dear, it's a prince he ought to be, and he'll never be anything but a pauper!")

"Then Nowell and I turned out into the fog, and trotted as fast as we could along the street and round the corner to 61, Great North Street, which is where his grandfather lives. He kept up a running explanation all the way, amidst our chokings and coughings, of how it was awfully good of me to go, and how I should find the people awfully slow, and how I was not to be surprised at anything his grandfather said, or did. So I encased myself in a triple armour of resolution, that nothing short of a civil reception should awaken the slightest surprise in me; and I kept on saying Yes, and No, till we got to the door, and he let himself in.

"Of course, 61, Great North Street is a mansion fit for kings, in comparison with my dwelling; still, as the house of a man who is said to have twenty thousand a year, it has nothing remarkable about it except its inadequacy. It is a double house, forming the centre of a row of single ones. They have all, if you could see them by daylight, stucco fronts (stucco does not wear well in this climate), and ironwork porches, and balconies on the first-floor.

"There was a savoury smell, I will say that; and when we had taken off our coats, Nowell took me upstairs, and into a big room, which I suppose is the drawing-room.

"There was a company assembled. Now that I come to the point, I feel how impossible it is for my feeble pen to do justice to that company. It is appalling when one thinks of what a vast mass of British men and women it is more or less typical. I never was so thankful before that you and I, and all belonging to us, escaped being respectable. To that, I attribute the fact that I am even so decent, or so little indecent as I am, in my life and conduct. To feel that one had to sustain the burden of a respectability like that would either crush one, paralysed for ever, into its shape, or drive one into every kind of excess, by way of a relief from its iron gloom and monotony.

"I think I will go on the principle of *seniores priores*, and begin with the venerable host himself. I had never seen him before. His health had been bad all the winter—bronchitis, I think—and he had not been allowed to leave the house.

"When I went in with Hugh, this venerable man was sitting at one side of the fireplace, in ordinary morning dress, and with a little black velvet skull-cap on his head; a stalwart stick, the

knob of which he grasped tightly, was in his shrivelled hand. And I got the impression that whatever he clutched or took a fancy to, be the same a thing, a whim, a prejudice, or a hatred, that same he would hold as he did the knob of his stick, with a grip that nothing but death would be able to loosen. He had silvery white hairs, innocent and hoary, falling over his bowed old shoulders. So far as one can judge from a wrinkled old face of seventy or eighty, I should say that in youth he had been handsome. But now, with every wish to make allowances for age and circumstances, all I can say is, he looked like an embodied Snarl, which might bark forth at any moment. When we came in he fixed his eyes upon us, and scowled till we could hardly see them; and he continued thus to glare at us as we went up the room—it was a good long room, and the ordeal was a trying one, but I went through it with my accustomed self-possession.

"'This is Mr. Lawford, sir; a friend of mine, who has consented to take Mr. Magson's place.'

"He spoke pretty loud, but his grandsire feigned not to hear him.

"'*Who*, do you say?' he asked, surveying me as if I were a pickpocket, and he would like to lay his stick about me.

"Nowell repeated the information, while the company maintained a deadly silence.

"'Hoh!' said Mr. Nowell, senior, and glared harder than ever.

"My private opinion is that old men—or old women either, if there are any—who behave in that way ought to be strangled. Not a word of welcome, not even a 'How-do-you-do?' to which one might have muttered an answer. What can you say to 'Hoh'? I did my possible. As he said nothing, neither did I. I contained my indignation, and dissembled again, bowing solemnly, and looking as majestic as I could. Then at last he gave a sort of nod; and Nowell, who quite understood the circumstances, took my arm, and wheeled me round, and I began to observe the rest of the company. But each in his turn. You can leave this unread if you like. I have nothing to do, no other news to give you, and it amuses me to write it, so I shall go on till I have done.

"'Mrs. Robson—Mr. Lawford,' said Nowell; and I bowed myself before an elderly woman, in whose grey countenance, and hair like unto it, all the conventionality, and dulness, and ultra-respectability of the whole set seemed to be concentrated, as salient characteristics are concentrated in a type. When I saw her my heart sank. She wore a black silk gown and a white lace

cap; and I think if one had wanted to give a name to the thing of which she was the expression, 'rigidity' is the word one would have chosen. I almost expected her to say 'Hoh!' too; perhaps all the company might say it. But she did not; she held out her hand, and though she did not manage to conjure up a smile, she did say, 'How do you do, Mr. Lawford? We are much obliged to you for coming.' I responded to the effect that I was happy to be of service in any way. I concluded from her words that, whether relation or housekeeper, Mrs. Robson was the mistress of the house; for, I must tell you, Hugh Nowell had never mentioned a relation to me, except his grandfather; and, for aught I knew, he might live alone with this engaging old man. Nowell then, with undisturbed solemnity of demeanour, wheeled me off once more, to the other side of a round table, at which two young ladies were sitting. They were both dressed in white, and one of them, as I soon discovered, was a bride.

"'Mrs. Roper—my cousin, Miss Nowell—Mr. Lawford,' said Hugh; and then he loosed my arm, and I knew that I was to be spared introductions to the rest of the company. The bride smirked; 'my cousin, Miss Nowell,' first gave a steady look at me; then shot a glance at Hugh, and her lips gave a queer little twitch, as if she would have liked to burst out laughing; after which she cast her eyes down, and maintained silence.

"'My brother was *so* sorry he couldn't come,' the bride said to Nowell; and I heard her in a sort of dream, my attention being otherwise occupied, as I will explain to you.

"'We are sorry not to see him,' said Hugh.

"I took the intensest dislike on the spot to this wretched bride, though it was only later in the evening that I was able to give my undivided attention to her. I wish you could have seen her. She was very stout, and I suppose what you would call pretty, in a florid, full-blown common style—dark hair and eyes, and red cheeks, like one of Etty's sirens, and about as attractive to me. Said hair fluffed out over her far from intellectual forehead in front, piled high behind, and bound stoutly together by ropes of pearls. Diamonds she wore in great abundance: likewise lace, likewise satin, with an extensive display of bust and red, stout arms—general effect, too much stuff in the skirt of her gown, and far too little in the body of the same, with appearance of bursting out of her garment on all sides: a horrid, imbecile smirk, and affectations enough to sicken you; a high, mincing voice, which thousands of pounds worth of jewellery could never have sweetened—altogether, a loathly spectacle to me. She went on smirking and talking to Nowell the uttermost nothings, and he

raised his eyebrows, and cast down his eyes, and did the civil as well as he could.

"But, to tell the truth, I did not discover all these seductive bridal charms until much later in the entertainment; though, when I had beheld them, they made, as you will have seen, a vivid impression upon me. I saw them now as in a glass darkly, for I was so bewildered and so lost in astonishment at the aspect of 'my cousin, Miss Nowell,' that I felt feeble with surprise. I had no idea that Hugh had such a relation. How he could live daily with her, and never speak of her, is a great mystery to me. I have knocked about in a good many places, and in all sorts of company, but I am quite serious when I say that nowhere, be it in 'Greece, Italy, or England,' not to mention the tropics or the antipodes, did I ever see a face that I thought so beautiful. And the odd part of it is, that none of them seemed to know in the least what sort of a creature they had amongst them. Such a face cannot be described; it is itself. But you will know the style of it if I tell you that it is pale, with the true *morbidezza* pallor; and grand—not pretty or beautiful, and nothing else—with a certain antique, classical grandeur, but living, not marble. I would not answer altogether for the sweetness and reasonableness of the nature under that magnificent gloomy mask of a face—but as a mask, it is enough to set any number of men raving. Eyes, of I don't know what colour—the colour of midnight, I suppose—a violet, not a black midnight; and hair, waving, thick, and abundant, to match. A fine, sculptured sort of throat, and delicate little ears, like shells, in delightful contrast to those of the bride, and a figure which I call perfect, on the slender side of fulness.

"It is all very fine to catalogue her beauties in this way, one by one, but I feel somewhat as if I committed sacrilege in doing so; and besides, it gives no idea of the breathing girl—the living woman. I said she was in white too; I wonder the bride had not the sense to go and sit in another corner, and not place herself in such close and disastrous proximity to Miss Nowell. Her gown was one of these soft, creamy, Oriental silks—you know the kind I mean—which you can crush up in your hand, and they never rustle nor crease. In exquisite contradistinction to that of its neighbour, this gown was high, and plain, and had little gathers or folds—your feminine experience will supply you with the name of the thing—up to her beautiful throat and down to her lovely elbows, with a silver belt round her waist. She had a coral necklace round her neck, and coral pins in her dusky hair, and long yellow gloves on, but no bracelets nor any horrid shining things

about her. I cannot describe the extraordinary effect of her appearance amongst these Philistines—like a Sphinx amongst a set of domestic animals, or a she-eagle brooding in the midst of a flock of barnyard fowls. Where she came from, how she got there, by what miraculous chance she is the grand-daughter of the embodied Snarl of whom I have spoken, was such a mystery to me, that it troubled me and worried me. And how it was that Hugh had never so much as mentioned her—unless, indeed, there exists a reason for his silence, which I could easily imagine—I cannot tell. There was a vacant chair beside her, and I took it, and made some observation to her; I think I uttered the meaningless and preposterous untruth that Nowell and I had nearly lost our way in the fog.

"'I thought you lived close by—Hugh said so,' she said, in a rather low and decidedly contralto voice, which seemed to reprove the bride's wiry tones.

"'So I do, in Barton Street,' said I, resolving to let her know at once that it was not from any more distinguished quarter that I came.

"'Then you must both have been very foolish if you could possibly lose your way in coming here from there, unless you did it on purpose," she said, with tranquil contempt. I did not care for that. I had got her to say something, and I took no notice of her disdainful indifference, but said people might do a good many rather stupid things when they were in a great hurry.

"'Do you mean that you were in a hurry to get here?' she asked, measuring me with her eyes in a way that said clearly, 'You can say so if you like, but I shall certainly not believe you.' And then her glance wandered round to the rest of the guests, and mine followed it, while I said:

"'No; but Hugh was, to get me here.'

"She gave a little laugh, and in a momentary silence I observed a middle-aged man with a bluff-looking countenance, and a stiff air of one unaccustomed to evening dress; also two more ladies, both middle-aged, and both dressed in much barbaric splendour of gold of Ophir and diamonds of Golconda. Then dinner was announced, and Nowell, seizing hold of me, hurried me off to one of these women, whom he called Mrs. Magson, and told me to take her to dinner. Then he fled back to the bride, found time to whisper something to his cousin, to which she gave a little nod—I thought it was odd if he had no understanding with her—and with a brave face he led his fair one off; old Nowell came last, supported by Mrs. Robson. Nowell did host's duty, in the matter of taking the head of the table and doing the honours. I soon

discovered that my lady was the wife of the man who had failed to put in an appearance. It didn't seem to have occurred to her that the proper thing would have been for her to stop away too; but I was not sorry for that, as it had at any rate given me the opportunity of seeing this extraordinary entertainment and the people at it, including Miss Nowell. But it waxes late, and my pen drops from my fingers. Good-night, Katty. I will go on to-morrow."

Chapter II.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"As I said, Mrs. Magson's want of acquaintance with the rules of etiquette had given me a place at the table, just opposite to Miss Nowell, so that I saw her admirably; and the bride, I am thankful to say, was far away, beside the devoted Hugh, and on my side of the table, so that I didn't see her at all. I could not keep my eyes from this girl's face. The beauty and the melancholy of it grew upon me; and every time I looked at her, she seemed to start with ever fresh splendour and loveliness from the mass of deadly commonplace which framed her in on every side. You will say, it does not in the least follow from her looks that she was not as commonplace as the rest of them. I know it need not follow; but it is a fact that she is not in the least like the rest of them. The conversation was almost entirely about local and district matters—about 'our chapel,' and 'our minister,' and 'our committee.' Mrs. Magson enlarged upon them all, and gave me the history of the whole church. Old Nowell is a strict Wesleyan Methodist, cut and dried, and has given, she told me, 'sums of money' to 'our chapel.' You know the sort of people—Dissenters, absolutely rolling in money, and with their ideas of how either to spend or to save the same in an enlightened manner, in a state of chaos, neither more nor less. There was barbaric splendour of jewels which duchesses might have coveted, together with a strong feeling against theatrical entertainments, as sinful. The remarkably *decolletée* toilette I have spoken of, with every air of mincing and *minauderie* imaginable, appeared not incompatible with a conviction that all card-playing, from a friendly rubber downwards, was gambling, and an invention of the evil one. But, though I gathered things like this, I had yet to learn the strength of the reserve force in the shape of Philistinism, dulness, utter absence of any sense of the ridiculous, and any appreciation of the fit and appropriate, which this company had concealed in the background. After I had let Mrs. Magson

discourse for a long time on bazaars, and on what 'our minister, Mr. Partington,' thought about them, and after I had heard of the winter tea-parties, Dorcas meetings, and sales of work, I tried to edge gradually round to this girl, and get to know something about her. I had tried books and music, but in vain. They didn't read novels; her girls were growing up, and she wished to turn their minds to more serious things. They didn't go as a rule to the Grand Concerts—didn't altogether care for the style of music there; and they had a good deal of music, and performances and concerts connected with the chapel, and so forth. So, as I found most legitimate subjects of small talk, literally, *religiously*, barred to me, I fell back upon gossip, which, with its sister, scandal, can always effect an easy entrance into this sort of society, as we both know, my dear, don't we? I said, though of course I knew better, that I supposed Miss Nowell was Hugh's sister.

"'Oh dear no!' said Mrs. Magson, interested at once. 'She's his cousin, the daughter of a younger brother of Hugh's father.'

"'Are the fathers both dead?' I asked.

"'Yes; both. Some people think Mr. Nowell treated his sons very hardly. I think he was severe, but I think he had a right to be.'

"'Ah! I always think it wants a good deal of justification for a father to treat his sons harshly.'

"'Yes, perhaps it does. But still—you see, they both objected to the business. They wanted to go their own way. And it must have been a blow to him when one of them said he would be a lawyer, and the other a—*soldier*—Mr. Lawford.'

"'Is there anything so corrupt and bad about a soldier—of necessity, I mean?'

"'Oh, it's a shocking class, the military. All our principles go against them. My father always used to say he'd rather see me in my grave than married to a soldier."

"I reflected that this and similar opinions were prevalent amongst a certain class, so I drove on in search of more tangible information, and said:

"'Had Miss Nowell and her cousin been brought up together?'

"'No; she's only been here for the last four years. Hugh has lived with his grandfather ever since he was eight years old, but Peril's father——"

"'Peril!' I echoed. And I could not help looking at her again. She did not hear us, I am sure. I don't even know if she saw us, but her eyes seemed to be fixed upon us with a far-off gaze. The bridegroom had fallen to her share as a partner, and she did not seem to appreciate his society; while I should say,

judging from his choice of a wife, if he did choose her, poor man! he must have been equally unable to appreciate hers. He was literally buried in his dinner, and her splendid face was, as I said, turned towards us, with a look of unfathomable sorrow in her great eyes. I turned mine aside, feeling guilty, and Mrs. Magson observed:

"'Oh, you evidently know nothing about her.'

"Mrs. Magson was stout and red; she wore brown satin and fine lace, and ornaments of cat's eyes and diamonds. If the right woman had worn that gown everyone would have said what perfect taste she had; but the wearer was Mrs. Magson, and the effect was melancholy. Still, let me tell you, Mrs. Magson was honest, in her way—nothing of the sham about her, and I could talk to her without feeling revolted.

"'No,' said I, 'I don't. I wish you would tell me.'

"'Her father,' said Mrs. Magson, 'married a yeoman's daughter—quite a small yeoman— and he' (she glanced towards our host) 'was so enraged at the degradation of it, that he cast him off.'

"'Being descended from princes himself,' I murmured.

"'No; he began life as an office boy,' she said, in the most perfect innocence of any satirical intention on my part. 'He gave him a small allowance, and for a while he stopped in England with his bride's relations, at some little out-of-the-way place called Wiswell in Yorkshire.' (I started; it is odd, Katty; and I fancy I have heard the name, but it is so long since we had any connection with Wiswell that I can't recollect about it.) 'Then they set off for South America. I never could quite make out why. I think he'd heard of some place in Rio, or something. His wife went with him. On the voyage'—her voice dropped; even Mrs. Magson could not succeed in telling this part of her tale otherwise than impressively—'the poor young woman gave birth to a child—the child who has grown into that girl opposite to you. It was an awful thing, I have heard; a fearful storm was raging, and they were all in peril of their lives. But the storm went down at last; the vessel was saved; the baby lived, but the mother died. The father was frantic, and, they say, could not bear to look at the child. It was baptized by the ship's chaplain; and when young Nowell was asked what its name was to be, he at first refused to name it, because he said its advent had ruined his life. They wanted to call it Marion, after its mother; but he said never should any such ill-starred child bear her beloved name. The chaplain reproved him, and bade him remember what perils they had been delivered from—perhaps even the

child's mother, in that God had seen fit to remove her. He only laughed, and said they did not know what they were talking about; and that as Peril seemed to be the order of the day, Peril they might call the child, and nothing else would serve him. Peril she was baptized, and Peril she is to this day.'

"'Did he use her unkindly?'

"'Not to call unkindly. He simply didn't care anything about her. As soon as he could, after he'd got work, he put her into a convent school at Rio, with some nuns, whom he paid to take charge of her altogether. But he never settled down. He got restless and dissatisfied; and at last he joined the army in one of the risings, and got killed in a skirmish. Then they sent for this girl, and found her, at about fifteen, with these nuns, learning things their way, you know—very ignorant of everything except Popish superstitions' (I suppose such things as Wesleyan Methodist superstitions do not exist!), 'and they brought her home to civilize and *Christianise* her, if they could.'

"I could not help thinking that Christianity and civilization, as recommended to her by Ebenezer and Ebenezer's congregation, must have proved irresistible to this poor, gloomy-looking Peril. How she must have cast aside the cold and unlovely practices of the Roman Catholic Church, to embrace the warm and loving, and above all, beautiful substitute offered to her! I looked at them all—Mrs. Robson, in rigid propriety, seated beside old Nowell, whose head was sunk between his shoulders, and who addressed no one, and was solely occupied with the simple dish which he was allowed to 'eat; 'Hankinson, the manager, dull and conventional; the bride in her rampant vulgarity; the bridegroom; good Mrs. Magson herself; Hugh—my eyes fell upon him. He is very handsome, and has a natural distinction of manner; he is quick, impulsive, with an infectious laugh; and I suppose, if he were lovemaking, would be as earnest about that as about the necessity for manhood suffrage, and for abolishing the House of Peers. A question slipped from my tongue before I had time to think what I was saying.

"'Will she marry her cousin?' I asked.

"Mrs. Magson screwed up her mouth and shook her head. The question interested her, almost as much as it did me.

"'I can't tell. It would be very natural if they fell in love with each other, thrown together as they are. But I don't know what Mr. Nowell would say to such a thing. He has great ideas of founding a family. I should fancy he would want Hugh to marry well; and likely enough he will leave all his money to him, and an annuity, or a small fortune, or something like that, to

Peril. But I really don't know. She is something of an interloper, you know, poor thing! and I often feel sorry for her. Her grandfather does not care for her, and she was worse than unwelcome to *one* member of the family.'

"'Not Hugh, surely? he would never be so ungenerous——'

"'Oh no; not Hugh—Mrs. Robson is the person I mean.'

"'Ah—h!' I could not help saying; and it flashed upon my mind that Peril's trials and provocations might be more than tongue could tell, if Rigidity wanted to squeeze her into the shape she thought good.

"'Who is Mrs. Robson?' I asked.

"'They call her "Aunt Agatha"—the young ones—but she's really a sort of distant cousin of Mr. Nowell's, a widow who came to keep house for him after his wife died, nearly twenty years ago.'

"I did not like to pursue the subject further—indeed, I felt as if I had got enough to think about, as it was. The dinner, which was a very grand one indeed, and must have cost a mint of money, waxed ever longer, duller, drearier. The conversation was full (if that isn't a bull) of awful gaps and pauses. No one seemed as if he or she was really glad to see any one else. It simply was what Hugh had told me—a feed, to keep in good temper some rich and powerful business connections of old Nowell's who would probably reward him in the course of time with a similar feed in return for his. There was no pretence of any social aim in it. The ladies at last went away. I succeeded in getting to the door before Nowell, and in opening it. And I took a look at Peril as she swept out.

"The conversation immediately became much more brisk; it turned upon stocks, shares, the money-market, and similar topics. A broad Lancashire, or rather Darkingford accent; an extreme scarcity of *h*'s; the repeated expression by the talkers of their settled conviction that 'the value of a thing is what it'll *fetch*, ya' know'—these were the characteristics of the discussion. I reflected that as I should most likely never be asked there again, I might as well make the most of my chances now, so after a time I deserted the men, and found my way upstairs to the drawing-room.

"You will be getting tired of this, so I will cut it short. Peril was sitting apart. The other women were talking over the everlasting chapel affairs, which I suppose are as much to them as her balls and routs and assemblies to a woman of fashion. I sat down beside Miss Nowell, though the bride smirked sweetly upon me. This is not a delusion of inordinate vanity on my part. She did, and Miss Nowell said to me in a low voice:

"'Don't you see Mrs. Roper wants to speak to you? Why don't you go to her?'

"'Because I would rather not," I said; upon which a gleam of a sort of dry amusement came into her eyes, and she said:

"'What a delightful time Hugh must have had with her at dinner. I did not look at him, or I should have laughed, and you will have seen by now that we don't meet together to do anything so silly as that.'

"'Perhaps you and Hugh get your laugh afterwards?' I suggested.

"She nodded and smiled—a smile which showed her white teeth, and went over her face like a flash of sunshine. 'Lucky dog!' I thought, and I understood that he might easily enjoy these laughs 'afterwards' so much that he didn't care to talk about them. Still, that he had never mentioned her at all!

"'Have you known Hugh long?' she asked me.

"'Ever since I came to Darkingford, nearly six months now.'

"'Ah! and do you—oh, now, Mr. Lawford, you will begin to enjoy yourself. We are going to have prayers now, do you see? We are a very religious family, and so united!'

"And indeed, my dear Katty, the climax of the entertainment now arrived. The other men came into the room. Old Nowell was tired—his snarling aspect was more strongly marked than ever. Hugh alone bore the faintest resemblance to a gentleman. The other men were red in the face—not at all elevated, mind you, but full of wine and dinner, and with echoes of the yarn-market and the Stock Exchange still lingering in their talk. And directly after their appearance a maid-servant entered bearing in her hands the confirmation of Miss Nowell's promise—a very large Bible and a book of prayers of a more moderate size bound gorgeously in brown morocco—and no one seemed surprised. Mrs. Robson, in a matter-of-fact voice, requested Mr. Hankinson, the manager, to 'favour them,' which he did, reading a peculiarly vindictive Psalm, in which he consigned his enemies, and all them that hated him without a cause—of whom I am sure I am proud to call myself one—to torture and perdition. This was followed by a prayer that *He* would bless all their undertakings, mercantile, social, and domestic, including, I suppose, dinner-parties, brides, and all the rest of it, at 61, Great North Street; and 'soon after this was over, the company dispersed.'

"Anything so extraordinary and so repulsive as this dragging together of worldliness and other-worldliness, and tying them in the same string in spite of their pulling strongly in such different

directions, I never saw. I did not know whether to burst out laughing, or to sit and gape helplessly, with vacant eyes and mouth. These prosperous, money-grubbing men, with not two ideas in their heads beyond lucre—buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest—with, for reward, the means to give a mighty feed like the one we had partaken of, and to cover their wives with pearls and diamonds; these women (you may strike Peril from them, and Hugh from the men; he has something else in his head than the scraping up of pelf), in silks and satins and jewels, full of sectarian pride, vulgarity, and an ignorant and timid exclusiveness and fear of all who differed from them or went to the chapel over the way—every thought concentrated on the here below; and then this loathly formality of remembering their Creator—I have not got over it yet. It all seems like a dream. Kiss my lad for me, and tell him his dad thinks of him by day and by night. I kiss you, too, and send my greetings to Woodfall.

"Ever your brother,
"PAUL."

CHAPTER III.

IN THE PARK.

Two days after he had despatched this voluminous letter to his sister, Paul Lawford turned out of his lodgings in Barton Street, and took his way towards Mr. Nowell's house in Great North Street. As he had said to his sister, it was scarce five minutes' walk from where he lived, although the two houses, and, thought Paul as he penned the remark, the two conditions, incomes, sets of circumstances also, were so entirely dissimilar. Lawford, in making this call, was perfectly well aware that he was doing a thing which no one expected of him. Nowell himself, as he knew, was friendly enough with him; the other members of the family—his cousin, grandfather, and Mrs. Robson—had probably not bestowed a thought upon him since his visit. He was perfectly conscious that he had been fully and freely accepted and looked upon as the stray young man, useful to fill up a place which it would have been impertinent to invite a person of position to occupy—a stop-gap, a "friend of Hugh's," whom nobody asked about, and nobody wanted to see again. He had this conviction very strongly—latent if unexpressed; and yet, despite this, and despite the fact that he carried a very sensitive spirit under his lazily indifferent exterior, he was sallying forth this afternoon, to make the regulation call: partly because it

was the regulation thing to do, and he had no objection to let these uncultivated Nowells know it; and partly, though he had scarcely owned it even to himself, on the chance of seeing Peril Nowell again—because her face, and her eyes, and her shape, as she moved or sat still, had haunted him ever since the night on which he had first seen her. Let it be understood that this was all. He had not sent his thoughts any further. He was exceedingly poor, and his indifference was but a cleverly-worn veil to conceal a great deal of pride; not the sort of pride that is afraid or ashamed of work, but that which would not make the semblance of an effort to mix with people like these, much richer than he was; profoundly ignorant, and inordinately set up with their riches. He was quite aware that, though Hugh Nowell was his friend, yet that the Nowell set in general would look upon him as but one degree removed from pauperism, and as deserving of all the pains and penalties attendant upon such a condition. He had the chance of seeing this girl again, and of getting a little amusement and a little pleasure from an interview with her, and he was disposed to avail himself of the chance; and that was his sole motive in going there this afternoon.

He went up to the door of 61, Great North Street, and pulled the bell. Almost before it had begun to ring, the door was suddenly opened, and he was confronted by Peril Nowell herself, dressed for walking. She had a sort of satchel in her hand, and must have been in the act of opening the door when he rang.

She paused when she saw Lawford, and said:

"Oh!"

"I am afraid I am unfortunate. You are just going out?"

"Why, have you come to see me?" she asked, deliberately and gravely, as she fixed her eyes upon him with inquiry, but without surprise. A servant had appeared in answer to Lawford's ring, but seeing the two talking together, she retired.

"Yes, partly," said Paul, who, with a certain instinct, perhaps more one of self-defence than anything else, took the tone of being quite careless and indifferent to her. "I simply came to call here, after your party the other night."

"Oh yes, I see! The Darkingford men are generally in their offices at this time of day. Mrs. Robson, who will appreciate your attention, I am sure" (with a smile, which, as he could not help seeing, was more malicious than genial), "is upstairs, with grandpapa. Would you like to see her?"

"If she is at liberty," he began steadily, and, as he flattered himself, honourably passing by any opportunity for paying a

compliment, or suggesting that he preferred her company to that of Mrs. Robson.

"Oh, she is quite at liberty. You can spend the whole afternoon with her, if you like. I should think, though, that a walk would do you a great deal more good. I am going to Southfield Park with this bag. You may come with me, and carry it, if you like; *or* you may go upstairs, and see Mrs. Robson and grandpapa. Which will you do?"

"I will go with you, thanks," said Paul promptly, and resolved, whether she expected it or not, to show no astonishment, nor any signs of being flattered by the invitation. He had a deep inner sense that the girl's strange name was not altogether inappropriate to her nature, and that to play with her, in any way, might involve dangerous consequences.

"I thought you would," she replied tranquilly, as she pulled a bell in the hall; and he decided within his own mind that this was the first stroke of luck he had had since coming to Darkingford. It might be the precursor of more; the queen of trumps might have turned up at last, and his misfortunes be coming to an end. If she were a coquette, she was a magnificent one; but he did not feel at all sure that she was anything of the kind.

"Please go to Mrs. Robson," she said to the maid who came to her, "and tell her that I shall walk both ways this afternoon, as Mr. Lawford is going with me."

Despite his resolutions, he found it difficult not to look a little surprised. She came out, the servant closed the door, and in a few minutes they were on their way to Southfield. It was a fine afternoon; copious rain had cleared away both frost and fog. Old February was going to fulfil his cognomen of "Filldyke," and though there was a lingering rawness in the air, yet the breath of the on-coming spring was the stronger of the two, even in the town. As pleasant an afternoon, for a change, as could be wished.

Lawford took the bag, which she committed to his charge with a rather distrustful look.

"Isn't it heavy?" she remarked. "I knew you would be surprised. You must be very careful of it, for there are sundry articles of food in it—invalid's food, such as jelly and so on—and they are going to a sick child, living in a dismal little street where I told you, on the other side of Southfield Park."

"And are you obliged to carry these things? Would you not have driven if I had not met you?"

"I should most likely have taken omnibuses—one way at any rate; not because I like it, but because it is dark when I get

home if I walk both ways, and Hugh goes on like a maniac if he finds out that I do it."

"I don't wonder," said Lawford, inwardly wondering how much right Hugh had to go on like a maniac about it.

"I'm surprised to hear you say that. I should have thought you had more sense," was the reply. "Are you one of the people who think that if girls have not got some one to go out with them, they must always stop in?"

"Not at all; but I should say he was right in not liking you to be out alone after it is dark."

"I can't enter into such an idea at all," she said coldly; "but the real reason why I like to walk both ways is that it is a long way off, and keeps me for a long time out of that house."

She glanced behind her with a look of aversion which was significant to him. They were now well on their way to Southfield Park, a large piece of ground laid out as a public garden, in one of the suburbs of Darkingford. When first opened, some eight years ago, it had been comparatively in the country; now the great town was stretching up to it, and around it in every direction, as if threatening to swallow it bodily in its smoky jaws; but it remained a pleasant oasis of grass, and flower-beds, and shrubberies, ponds, terraces, and trees, of a sort. It was full two miles from Great North Street, as Lawford knew; and he felt pleasantly exhilarated by the prospect of the long walk with this particular companion.

"You do not care for the people in 'that house,' as you call it?" he said.

"I hate everyone in it, except Hugh," was the comprehensive reply. And while he was framing some sort of a diplomatic answer to it, which was not easy, she broke in abruptly, "You say you have known him about six months?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of him?"

"I think he is a very clever, good-hearted lad, who will make a fine man when he has had time to learn his lesson a little."

"A lad—and what lesson?" she asked. There was indignant expostulation in the way in which she said "a lad." "Surely," she added, "a person ought to be a man at twenty-five, which is Hugh's age."

"I don't know what he ought to be; but, as a matter-of-fact, he is very often, as I said, a lad at that mature age. Of course there are great exceptions, but I don't think Hugh is one. And all the better for him, I say."

"He has always seemed to me very like a man," said Peril musingly. Lawford saw that she was deeply interested in the subject, and began to have a feeling of pique.

"And what lesson do you mean?" she added.

"I meant the lesson of life. It is one that we all have to go through, I suppose."

"I am sure Hugh has had lessons enough of that kind already. Grandpapa is one of the people who are always making rules, usually beginning, 'Thou shalt *not* do so and so.' He has made rules for Hugh till I wonder he does not throw something at him, put on his cap, and walk away, never to come back again."

"I suppose you would applaud such a course?" suggested Paul drily. "I hope he does not take your advice in the matter much; else, it seems to me, his prospects would be no better than my own."

"Some old people find pleasure in letting young ones enjoy themselves," Peril pursued; "at least, I have heard so. I am not sure whether I believe it. I don't think I do. I can only speak about grandpapa now from my own experience, and all the pleasure we get out of him is what we secure by circumventing him when he gets beyond everything."

"You combine, then, to circumvent him?"

"Oh yes; we used to have no end of fun by doing it, and getting nearly found out. Once Hugh had a supper-party. Grandpapa was up in his room, very poorly and very deaf, as he always is when his throat and chest are bad. We were carefully concealing everything about this supper-party, and it was all to go on in the lower rooms, when a most horrible idiot of an elderly lady came to call, and was taken upstairs to see grandpapa; I don't know why—not to put him into good spirits, I should think, for she was deplorable to look at. I happened to go into the room, and heard her saying to grandpapa, 'I hope the young people will enjoy themselves to-night.' I was horror-struck. 'What?' cried grandpapa; 'do speak louder: I can't hear!' 'I hope the young people will have a pleasant party.' He did not hear, but looked angrily at me and said, 'What does she say?' I made a most awful face at her behind his chair, and went and shouted in his ear, 'Miss Sedgwick thinks you're looking much better since she saw you last,' which opened her eyes considerably. We were always having escapes of that kind."

"But suppose he had known of the supper-party? What would he have done?"

"Raged himself nearly into a fit, till we had sent back word to

everybody," said Peril indifferently. "But Hugh goes out so much now, we don't have so many jokes of that kind, and it is frightfully dull."

"I should think so," said Paul sympathetically. "But you have friends, I dare say, like Hugh, whom you can go to see?"

"Not one," was the bitter, cold reply. "All the people they know are like those you saw the other night—delightful people to have for friends, don't you think? Mrs. Roper told me she would be charmed if I would go and see her, and the inducement she offered was that we could do crewel-work together."

"Bah!" said Lawford.

"Fancy how richly I should have felt rewarded, when I had covered all the drawing-room chairs with kitchen towelling adorned with bad imitations of fruit and flowers in wool," continued Peril, with a sardonic laugh; "not to mention the advantages to be derived from Mrs. Roper's society and conversation."

"Mrs. Magson seems a kindly sort of woman."

"She is very kind indeed; her kindness to me is wonderful, considering what a poor, darkened creature I am—a Papist, she thinks. Do you know that when I go there, she will not leave her daughters alone with me?"

"What an idiot!"

"I wonder what she would say if I told her that I didn't care two straws for religion—Popish or Protestant; and not one for her daughters, except that their ignorance amuses me. I like to hear them talking about missionaries; the youngest one is in love with a missionary, but though she is a Protestant, she keeps it quiet, and is acting lies every day of her life to her father and mother, who wish her to marry a young man with red hair and two large cotton factories of his very own."

"Then the missionary has not got red hair?"

"He is romantic-looking, very. She showed me his likeness; because it seems he once went to Rio, and being such a very distinguished character, and Rio such a very small village, she thought I could not have failed to see him. I reminded her that I was shut up in the convent school, studying Popish superstitions, and she screwed up her mouth, and made her eyes round, and said, 'Ah, yes!' and that if Edward—that is his name—could have seen me, he might have 'snatched me from the burning.'"

"Not interesting society, I must confess."

"It is all that I can have, and it is Grandpapa Nowell's doing. Oh, he is a wicked old man! I do hate him!"

Lawford hardly liked to glance at her as she said this, in a tone

of anger, bitter and intense, though suppressed. This unexpected walk with her was not so delightful, after all. He had disliked the elder Nowell heartily enough, but he was a man, and could feel a certain amount of sympathy with him on points whose very nature would have been a mystery to Peril, whose angry, disappointed girlhood saw only the personal injury—so he thought just now—and was blind to the possible existence of another side to the case. He thought of the old man—ill and weak, languishing in enforced inactivity; impotent to meddle more in the concerns which were dearest to him, and he thought Peril's judgment a harsh one.

"I thought Hankinson, the manager, had some family," he said.

"He has a daughter. I scarcely know her; she is one of those strong-minded women, I think, and twenty-seven years old, and 'serious.' I hate such people. Hugh goes there sometimes, and they talk about all sorts of things—politics and social things. I must have told hundreds of fibs to grandpapa to keep him from knowing that Hugh goes there."

"But why does he object?"

"Because he hates Radicals; and Miss Hankinson is a great Radical. You see, he was once a working-man and a Radical himself; now he hates working-men, and says Radicals are fools, who would let trades-unions have everything their own way, and run wages up, till people like him would be ruined. He would go wild, and be fit to disinherit Hugh, if he knew that he had taken up with any such ideas. Somebody once kindly told him—Mrs. Magson, in her benevolent way, I think it was—a long tale about Miss Hankinson's enormities; she must be a monster, you know, because she never enters the doors of Ebenezer, like me. He is obliged to keep Mr. Hankinson, because he is such a splendid manager; but, as you would see the other night, Mr. Hankinson was alone. If he knew that Hugh belonged to a Democratic club, and a place where they have working-men for members, and want manhood suffrage, and all that, I am sure he would turn him out of doors. He would never trust him with his money."

"And Hugh—how does he get on with him?"

"Oh, Hugh!" she said lifting up her lip and her chin. "He has known him all his life; he knows how to manage him."

"I could not imagine him 'managing' any one."

"Well, Hugh says his management consists of a policy of masterly inactivity. He does nothing, and says nothing; and so far it does not seem to have occurred to Grandpapa Nowell to suspect him. If he once did——"

"What?" asked Lawford, struck with something significant in her tone. And he looked at her.

Peril nodded her head slightly.

"Why, it would be all over with Hugh's prospects—that is all."

"Rather ticklish ground for you," observed Lawford; "suppose you inadvertently betrayed him."

"I could not betray him inadvertently," she replied composedly, "for Hugh is the only one of them who ever showed me a gleam of kindness or affection; he has got me out of scrapes—he has smoothed things over for me; he has made Mrs. Robson behave herself decently to me, because he could make her go on her knees to tie my shoes if he chose. It is just Hugh who has made my life tolerable, bearable to me; and if my tongue spoke a syllable to betray him, if it refused to tell a hundred lies a day, if need be, for his service, why, it would deserve to be torn out and trampled upon!"

"Ah!" thought Lawford, while he silently paced beside her, "it is not just as I thought. I imagined he must have lost his heart to her, and as a matter of fact she is over head and ears in love with him—and no wonder!"

"I could not do Hugh a wrong inadvertently," Peril pursued, after a pause, as if she wished to impress the fact upon his mind. "You cannot do a thing inadvertently when the constant subject of your thoughts is not to do that particular thing. No; he may have enemies—they say no one is without them—but it is not through me that any harm will ever come to him."

Her eyes lighted up; a smile, sweet and high, expanded on her face. This, he saw, the consciousness of this power and this trust it was, which kept her life endurable, as she had said.

"Why," she resumed, with a candour that startled him, "even in my rages, I never for one moment forget to keep clear of anything that might damage Hugh."

"In your rages!" echoed Paul, not sure whether to be most shocked or most amused at her *naïveté*.

"Yes. When a storm rises in me—and it does very often—it must break out. It always does. I should go mad if it did not;" and she turned and looked at Paul, who in his turn looked at her.

He felt a pang of disappointment, after all. There is something fascinating and romantic about a beautiful girl who is unhappy, or poor, or ill-used; but a beautiful girl who is very well off, and very bad-tempered—that is another thing; and it was useless to blink the fact, which everything she said had borne in upon his mind more and more strongly—Peril Nowell had "a temper."

"What a queer girl she is!" he thought. "I wonder what her object is in bringing me out and talking to me in this way. I can't help her—I can't do anything for her; it seems as if it were just that she might have the satisfaction of talking about her wrongs."

What she said next helped to confirm him in this idea:

"Perhaps you will wonder what I can have to make me get into rages. I wonder myself, sometimes, because of course I know that you never get anything by rages; you only weaken yourself."

"That is profoundly true, Miss Nowell. I wonder, if you know it so well, that you don't act upon it."

"I can't. Do you always act upon what you know to be true? Does anybody? I think about things till I get nearly mad."

She spoke in a bitter, low monotone, as if it were made known to her that she must say something; and she said it to the first person who came in her way. All the time she was talking Paul had a feeling that it was scarcely to him in particular that she spoke. He happened to be there; he could listen, and say "yes" and "no," and she poured forth her tale without pausing for a moment to wonder whether it pleased him to hear it or not. For his part, he felt intensely interested, and very much disenchanted, but anxious to hear to the end.

"What kind of things can you have to think about, that make you feel like that?" he asked. "Surely not the provoking ways of a cantankerous old man; you, in your youth and strength, ought to be able to pass them over lightly."

"Not just his provoking ways to me, but I think of the past, and of all the wickedness that he has committed. There are nearer relations than grandfathers, and he has deprived me of mine. I had a father once, and a mother, whom I never saw. But for him, I might have had my father and my mother now, and known what it was to be loved by them. I might have had brothers and sisters. I might have been a happy girl, instead of what I am."

"You might have been a happy girl; then I suppose you mean that you are an unhappy one?"

"Yes, I am. How should I be happy? I could imagine myself happy, in certain circumstances, which will never come to pass. But I am one of those objectionable people who are not born happy. Even if I had been, and had had everything bright and cheerful about me, I do not think I should be very happy. As it is, I have thoughts in my mind which might make any one unhappy—the thought that that wicked old man destroyed my father, because he would not do just what he wanted him to—be

a machine for making money, and nothing else. Then, my father became poor, and had to go abroad with his wife, and she died. And because she died when I was born, my father hated me, and called me, 'Peril,' and put me away from him, and left me with strangers. And because he did not care for me, or let me try to make up to him what he had lost, why, he threw it away—his life, I mean, and he died too, and left me alone: do you call these the sort of thoughts to make one happy?"

"They are thoughts which you ought never to have had," said Paul, more moved than he would have cared to confess, and thinking, too: "Poor thing! she takes everything hard; I'm afraid it's a bad look-out for her." Aloud he went on: "If I had had anything to do in such a matter—if you had been committed to my charge, I would never have let you know those facts; or if I had, I would have taught you to see them differently."

"Aha! you are not Mrs. Robson, you see," said Peril, with such bitterness, and such a sneer in her voice that Lawford began again to feel his interest grow even painful in its intensity. How she must have suffered, and how perfectly friendless she must be, to go on, bringing out one wrong after another, in this way, to him, to whom she had spoken once in her life.

"Mrs. Robson!" he echoed.

"Yes; I wormed it all out of Mrs. Robson," said Peril, with angry triumph in her voice. "She was very willing to tell, I can assure you. You see, she hates me and loves Hugh; she worships Hugh—adores him; she would like to kick me into the street as a beggar; she thinks it would be the most suitable calling for me."

"Don't you think you exaggerate a little natural jealousy?" he said; and he felt that, contrasted with her passionate earnestness, her bitterness and deeply burning resentment, his interpolations sounded flat and commonplace! but, after all, he did not see what there was, more original, to be said on the subject.

He wanted to hear her to the end; so, like a Greek Chorus, he threw in a question or a comment now and then, when she made a pause in the sort of rhapsody with which she enumerated her wrongs.

"Do I *think?*" she repeated contemptuously. "What is the use of talking about thinking, when I *know* such things as I do? I got it all out of her—all that he had said about my father, when he committed the crime of wanting to be a soldier and serve his country, instead of scraping up money in a counting-house—all that he said about my mother, who was good and beautiful, though she was but a poor farmer's daughter. Her ancestors had lived

for hundreds of years on the same soil, and tilled it. His—who knows what slum or what alley *his* mother came from? I heard all that he had said about my mother, and I heard—for she had learnt it by heart—the letter that my father wrote after his wife had died: it ought to have killed him with shame; only, you see, that is a feeling which he is unable to experience. I pretended that I wished to understand my real position with regard to my grandfather, and she, though she hypocritically pretended that she wished to spare my feelings, gloated—oh, how she gloated in telling the tale!"

"I cannot understand how you could go through with such a task," he said, half fascinated, half revolted.

"I did not falter over it. I wished to know what the people were amongst whom I was cast. I read her to the very soul then, and I have esteemed her since for what she is worth. How glad she would be if I died, or, better still, did something disgraceful or offensive, so that grandpapa might turn me out of doors!"

"Your grandfather may be a very harsh, bad old man, but no man who is a man at all would ever do such a thing; therefore Mrs. Robson's wishes are futile," he interrupted, quite eager to throw his little vial of oil upon the troubled waves. She laughed.

"I have never thought about that. I think he would do anything if money came in question. She would like me to be cast out, and that her beloved Hugh might have it all. She would grudge me so much as a hundred a year to keep me from starving. I understood then, that as I had come into the world unwelcome, and had had to live loveless ever since, so here, where I was helpless and a stranger, it was to be the same, but worse. My father was never openly unkind to me. Sometimes he used to send me presents to school, which I never cared for, and the other girls wondered why. When I told them that they were gifts of duty, not affection, and had no value in my eyes, they shook their heads, poor things! Chocolate was chocolate to them, and trinkets trinkets, in whatsoever spirit offered. The nuns were kind to me. I loved them best; I love them now. I would like to go back to them—at least, I think so sometimes."

"You would not really," he said, with conviction.

"No I know I would not. I wonder how you can tell?" she added, glancing at him with a momentary curiosity; "because I have twice got up in the middle of the night, intending to run away and go back to them—you must not tell Hugh that," she went on quickly, and as if recollecting herself.

"Certainly not. You tried to run away?"

"Yes; and once, when I got to the foot of the stairs, something

stronger than I was, drove me back. And the second time I had got out and gone down the street a little way, when a man met me, and took hold of my wrist——"

"Good God!" he ejaculated, feeling his face flame, "you must have been mad to venture out."

"I pushed him aside, and walked back. I felt afraid—quite sick. I went in again and cried, because I was not strong enough to do what I wanted."

The recital of this last episode had moved Paul to a high pitch of painful interest. The fascination was now stronger than the repulsion he felt. It was destined to be increased immediately, for almost directly she showed him a glimpse of the softer side of her wild nature, which, as it were, bound him to her, in spite of himself.

"Hugh does not know that you did this?" he said.

"No, no, no! How could I tell Hugh, when all the time he was being so kind to me, and trying to make things better for me! I said something stronger than I was drew me back the first time; it was the idea of what Hugh would think of me in the morning. He would have been broken-hearted. He does not like me, as I told you, to walk home alone after dark. If he had imagined me wandering about all night, he would have gone nearly mad. He is my one friend; can you wonder that I try to please him?"

"The wonder would be, if you did not," said Lawford, and fell into a train of silent musing, which she did not interrupt for a little time.

A woman, even a good woman, might have seen more of Peril's wilfulness, hardness, sullenness, and revengefulness than of the other side of the question; the present writer has heard a woman, good-hearted, clever, in a position of high rank in the educational world, say that there was one rule on which she invariably acted, and that was that when any girl came to a rupture with her relations, or failed to get on with her family, it was invariably the girl's own fault. This is a rule which would doubtless smooth one's way for one powerfully in dealing with such cases, and save much troublesome inquiry and investigation; as to its soundness, a humble student of human nature may perhaps be allowed to express some doubts.

Paul Lawford, however, was not a woman holding a distinguished position in the educational world; he was a young man of thirty-one, with a fine and sympathetic temperament, too fine and too sympathetic for him ever to achieve much success in a worldly point of view. He saw from his eyes and out of his

heart, and what he saw was a beautiful girl with an unhappy and gloomy nature, driven by stress of circumstances into a yet more unhappy condition than was hers by the inexorable law which ordains that when we come into the world, we come, not new coined, not independent and original beings, but compounded of the faults and failings, the vices and virtues, inextricably blended of perhaps hundreds of those mighty dead who have such influence over the living. Against these pitiless circumstances, her heart, hot and full of the keenest sensibilities, was battered constantly, each collision leaving it more mangled and more resentful than the last. To him it was a pitiable spectacle, and pity was exactly and almost entirely what he felt for her.

But as almost all tragedies are susceptible of being turned into burlesques—and the bolder their lines the more the scope for making fun of them—so, Peril's passionate resentment and bitter grief were not without their grotesque side.

"Hugh has a great idea of duty—obeying the voice of duty," she presently said. "I don't know how you find out which is the voice of duty, or how you tell it from any other voice, unless you go in for believing that everything disagreeable is required by duty, and that everything else belongs to pleasure, and ought to be avoided."

"It's a disputed point in ethics, and there have been a great many very thick and heavy books written about it. What is your view?"

"Oh, I let duty alone; Hugh is welcome to it. And I quietly build my own little altar to my own goddess, and I offer a sacrifice to her now and then; but she knows the great one is yet to come, and she is waiting—more patiently than I am, I dare-say."

"Waiting! for what?" he asked.

"For the great sacrifice, when it is ready. You must know I was given to understand that when grandpapa dies, I, if I had behaved myself discreetly in the meantime, would come in for some of his money—not much, I dare say. Hugh will get the most of it if nothing happens to make grandpapa quarrel with him; and it is fit that he should. I don't want it—I hate it, but I may expect a little share. When I get it, I am going to take my revenge on him, and all his years of scraping, by spending it systematically in every way that I know would be abhorrent to him—in fal-lals, and fads and fripperies, and all kinds of vain things that he would loathe. I hope to make him turn in his grave; then, perhaps, I may begin to think of enjoying my life."

She ceased to speak, and Lawford, though he smiled, did not

answer her. Her feelings were so tragic, her actions so childish and incomplete, her ideas of revenge at once so vindictive and so absurd. That was what one might expect, and there was something reassuring in the fact that it was so. Had her actions been commensurate with her feelings, he felt vaguely, though he did not put it into those words, fascination must have ceased, and repulsion taken possession of his mind. As it was, he could think "Poor child!" and feel that he was not altogether mistaken in his estimate of her. They had been for some time pacing through the walks of the park, and they now arrived at its farther gates.

"I have to go out here," she said; "the cottage is three minutes' walk farther on. If you don't mind waiting on that bench, I will very soon rejoin you."

He opened the gate for her, and she was soon lost to his view in one of the small side streets. He placed himself upon the bench, to wait for her, and of course he thought about her all the time she was away.

Thalberg.

Sigismond Thalberg, one of the most successful *virtuosi* of this century, was born at Geneva—according to his biographer, Mendel, on May 5, according to Fétis on January 7, according to a brother of his now established at Vienna, who gave me the authentic date, on February 7, 1812. Being the son of Prince Dietrichstein, who had many wives without ever being married, Thalberg had several brothers of different family names. The one just mentioned is Mr. Leitzinger, three months older than Thalberg—a fact which speaks for itself. Another half-brother of his is Baron Denner. Thalberg's mother was the Baroness Wetzlar, a highly-educated lady, full of talent, and who took the greatest care of Thalberg's early education. In Geneva he remained in the Pension Siciliewski under the guidance of a governess, Madame Denver, and under the superintendence of his mother. This Madame Denver, and Mr. Müller—a Frenchman, although his name be German—took Thalberg to Vienna to his father's palace. He was then just ten years old.

He arrived at Vienna as Vienna was sixty years ago—very different from what it is now. Vienna then, with a view to successfully defending the town against an eventual siege, was surrounded by a bastion (Bastey), very high walls, and a deep entrenchment (Stadtgraben) to be filled with water at the mere approach of would-be storming beleaguers. Within this limited circle lay what is now called the inner city: a crowd of narrow streets and but a few squares. The whole Ring, the pride of to-day's city, with its rows of palaces, gardens and broad streets, built upon the very place where the bastion and the surrounding entrenchment once lay, did not at that time exist. Prince Dietrichstein's palace, above mentioned, stood, however, outside the town, or what was then considered the town, outside the inner walls.

The Prince was so fond of his boy that he gave up an Ambassadorial appointment to devote all his time to "Sigi's" (this was his pet name) education. Thalberg early showed a great aptitude for music and for languages, and was destined by his father to become a diplomatist, and with a view to this, had the best masters to teach him

If a friendly—perhaps too friendly—source is to be credited, he made rapid progress, especially in Greek and geography, which no doubt explains the curious collection of maps with which Thalberg adorned his room at Naples. His first success dates back so far as 1826, when he was fourteen years old, and played at an evening party at Prince Clemens Metternich's, the then master of the diplomatic world. He it was who once replied to a lady, a great patroness of music, who asked him whether it really was true that he was not fond of music, "Oh, Madame je ne la crains pas!"

Some one present at an evening party at the same Prince Metternich's house on the Ballplatz, told me that there the same thing happened fifty years ago which took place at Leeds last month. Gas adapted to illuminating private houses had just been invented, and the Prince gave the first great evening party with a profusion of that brillant light. As the clock struck midnight a lady in ecstasy remarked: "I hope no evil spirit (kein böser Geist) will spoil our pleasure: it *is* so pretty!" when suddenly, as if the invocation had called forth some ill-behaved witch, the whole suite of apartments became pitch-dark; and nobody having dreamt of such a possibility, no wax candles were anywhere to be found, and not only was the ball suddenly brought to an end, but it is easy to imagine the confusion and complications consequent upon the sudden darkness. So at Leeds in October, during the festival, the hall, lighted up with electricity, suddenly became grey from the blue-white it had just been, but the honorary secretary not waiting for the grey in its turn to become black, rushed out and got the gas turned on, which fortunately had not been abolished. It is remarkable that since that time there has never been an evening party given at the Palais Metternich without half the illumination resting upon the possibility of wax candles, which shows once more that there is nothing new even under the electric sun.

Various are the stories about Thalberg's piano teachers; but it is certain that he was taught by Mittag, and that the great organist and harmonist, Sechter, the first German who simplified and most clearly demonstrated the principles of harmony, taught him counterpoint. Fétis, whose information is especially doubtful with regard to German composers, gives many details of Thalberg which he did not sufficiently verify. Czerny never taught Thalberg, though he gave five or six lessons to Franz Liszt. In Vienna are a number of professors who pretend to have instructed both Liszt and Thalberg. But just as a poor man, who leaves his village friendless and uncared for, the moment he succeeds in making a great fortune in a big city, suddenly finds

himself surrounded by a number of cousins and nephews whose existence is news to him, so masters spring up like the armed men from the dragon's teeth, when an artist becomes a celebrity. The first occasion on which Thalberg became known was in 1833, at a *soirée* at Count Apponyi's, then Austrian Ambassador at Paris. Thalberg was then twenty-one years old, of an extremely agreeable, aristocratic appearance, refined manners, and very witty; only a trifle too much given to making puns, an amusement rather easy in French, and which foreigners are too easily induced to indulge in. One day I passed with him through Regent Circus, when he saw at Peter Robinson's a piece of yellow silk (*foulard*). He asked me: "Shall I get you a dress-coat made of this? Ah," he added, "I have it: I'll give you an umbrella; that is the most appropriate thing to offer *en cadeau*." "How so?" I asked. "Why, of course," he replied, "the most appropriate, *en cas d'eau!*" Kind-hearted, and uncommonly careful not to say an incautious word against anybody or ever to hurt any man's feelings, he became at once the ladies' pet—and what that means in Paris those who know French society will not undervalue.

He was an innovator on the piano, though not of the first rank; he invented forms, notably effects. He had wonderfully formed fingers, the tips of which were real little cushions. This formation and very persevering study enabled Thalberg to produce such wonderful *legatos*, that Liszt said of him, "Thalberg est le seul artiste, qui joue du violon sur le clavier." When he plàyed for the first time in public, in Vienna, in 1829, his touch and his expression at once conquered the audience, but even then principally the ladies. In Paris his winning manners and his scientific mode of education, which with a very adroit modesty he knew how to show though seeming to conceal it, contributed as much as his talent to render him the talk of the day. It must not however be surmised that his execution, although it could not stand the test of comparison with that of the Attila of the piano, Liszt, nor the dreamy, attractive poetry of Chopin, was by any means ordinary. It is not true that, as another great *ca'embouriste* pretended, Thalberg "playingly" attained his high position (*en jouant*). He was so fond of music that he overcame Prince Dietrichstein's preconceived idea of a diplomatic career, only by dint of earnest study and determination. He often left his bed at three o'clock in the morning to practise on his piano, and those who heard him privately and knew him intimately, were much more able to appreciate the extraordinary difficulties he was able to overcome, than those who only heard him play his compositions in public. It was one of the reproaches which classical, but tedious players heaped upon

him, that "he did not play the great masters, but that he only shone in public with his own compositions." Yet when he played Beethoven it did not "amuse" the audiences of that day, and he lived before all for his success, for his own personality. Among all great piano-players, it should be said of him what Catalani said of Sontag: "His *genre* was not great, but he was great in his *genre*." He was amiable, both as a man and as a performer. His position, highly recommended as he was, and supported in society by Prince Dietrichstein, who endowed him with £20,000 and launched him with his powerful connections, was of course an exceptional one. It was one of the curious anomalies so often observable in life, that although he so earnestly preached against the mania of the century of sacrificing everything to effect, the gist of *his* art, the aim and purpose of all his musical studies, was nothing but to produce effect. That he was, musically speaking, of a most sympathetic, attractive, even irresistible organisation, it would be difficult to deny; but it is, above all, skill and education, which his piano compositions show, which, although influenced by Liszt's brilliancy and Chopin's florid style, are nevertheless more valuable than his orchestral and operatic compositions, which totally failed. He was a celebrated man for many reasons, one of which only was his executive talent, and for the successful endeavour to sing on the piano. It is a well-known fact that Madame Malibran, after hearing him play one evening, sang in a manner which astonished even her most ardent admirers. She made no secret of the reason of this extraordinary effort, which was caused by the excitement which the brilliancy and elegance of Thalberg's performance had engendered in her.

As a composer of operas, two events in his life are notorious, and both very unfortunate. His opera 'Christina' was a dead failure. 'Florinda,' which was performed under Balfe's direction in London in 1851, with Cruvelli, Sims Reeves, and Lablache, was, as an eyewitness states, found by the best critics of the time unpleasing, difficult to sing, uninteresting. Even the song, the only hit of the evening, and which was so well sung by Sims Reeves that it created a genuine success, was, to say the least, not a pretty one. Certainly whatever society could do to help was done. The Queen and Prince Albert headed a most brilliant assembly, and everything was prepared to make the work acceptable, but the thin stuff of the score could not be sustained. Besides, that which ruined Flotow's 'Undine,' happened here also. The curtain went down before the close, and after nearly everybody had left their seats, up went the curtain again, and Sims Reeves was discovered rescuing from the flames Madame Cruvelli. The

story was badly told, the music was thin and incredibly devoid of interesting ideas, and so the fate of the opera was sealed. It was asserted, by Thalberg's friends, that to Madame Cruvelli the absence of success was largely due. Not being pleased with her *rôle*, it is said, she deliberately sacrificed it, and at one moment even hummed instead of singing her air; so that a person sitting in the front row of the stalls, behind Balfe, heard Balfe call out to Cruvelli, "Sing properly, for if you do not respect yourself, you ought at least to respect the audience, among whom there is Her Majesty the Queen."

What Madame Cruvelli was capable of doing when her blood was up, an event very likely to occur with that capricious, spoiled child of the Paris world, she has several times most effectually shown. On the night of the first performance of 'l'Etoile du Nord' at the Opéra Comique, Madame Cruvelli had a quarrel with a journalist (Fiorentino by name). She entered her box, which was exactly opposite the Emperor Napoleon III.'s state box, in an ill-humour. Not having the slightest regard to the common courtesy due, not only to the Emperor, but to the ladies in his box, she deliberately put her feet on the border of the box, as much as to say: "I do not care for the whole audience;" and when an *aide-de-camp* of the Emperor came to her and told her that she prevented the Emperor from admiring her tasteful toilette, which was certainly a very courteous way of drawing her attention to her bad manners, she saucily remarked: "Dites à l'Empereur de ne pas regarder; cela n'en vaut pas la peine." Had a singer sent such a reply to the Emperor Nicholas she would have had to quit the capital next morning; but the Emperor laughed at her "advice," and what makes the affair still prettier, is, when, a very short time after, he met her at a great musical *soirée*, and she was in a more amiable mood, he asked her: "Dites-moi donc, Madame Cruvelli, quelle mouche vous a piquée le soir de la première de l'Etoile du Nord?" "Au pied?" she replied. "Your Majesty does not know all the annoyances and vexations of an artist's life; and it would be difficult for me to say how sorry I was not to be able to restrain my suffering better." Saying these words she looked, like the great actress she was, so concerned and downcast at the Emperor that he said to her: "Mais vous avez une si jolie main, et vous ne portez jamais de bague! Essayez donc si celle-ci va vous porter bonheur." Saying which he took from his finger a magnificent diamond ring, and placed it himself on her hand. That was her punishment!

I will, however, defend her from another charge which has

been brought against her. One evening when the 'Huguenots' was announced at the Grand Opéra, then situated in the Rue Lepelletier, Cruvelli bolted, and the audience, after having waited until 8.30 (the opera was announced to begin at 7.15), had to take their money back. An old Minister, then of great influence, had surreptitiously invaded her dressing-room, and she had after a vigorous struggle ejected him with such violence, that, afraid of the consequences, five minutes after, she fled to Venice, from whence she had to be brought back by a special messenger, armed with a letter of the Emperor, who assured her of his continued favour, and with a letter of the Minister in question, who pledged his word that not only should she not pay the penalty usually attached to such cases of indiscretion, but that she had nothing whatever to fear in the capital. So she was always victorious in the end, whether she was right or wrong.

But if Thalberg was not successful on the stage, it is but fair to say that his compositions for the piano not only combined novel effects, both in form and arrangement, but real invention. He had the talent, through adroit use of the pedal and new combinations, to make you believe that you heard two performers at the same time.

A catalogue of his piano compositions comprises sixty-five numbers, many of which earned glory and money for their author, and stamped him as a specialist for his instrument, the combined effects of which nobody had ever better understood. In order to explain the sensation which Thalberg produced with these works, it would perhaps be best to listen to one of the most competent judges and critics: Robert Schumann, who, himself a pianist of no mean order and a composer of great merit, was the very best authority to whom we could look for an able and just opinion. Schumann moreover was one of the composers for whom Thalberg had conceived a perfect enthusiasm, although their natures both as musicians and men so widely differed. Thalberg was the most amiable *causeur*, Schumann was as silent as Field Marshal Count Moltke, of whom the Emperor of Germany said last year: "My Moltke is silent in seven languages (schweigt in sieben Sprachen)." Thalberg was the man of society, of luxury, the man for the ladies; Schumann was a man of the simplest tastes, who never felt lonely except "in society." It is undeniable that until 1830 the performers of Mozart, Beethoven, Hummel and Moscheles, &c., submitted their talents to the interpretation of the composer, whereas afterwards arose that most unjustifiable habit of sacrificing the composer to the *virtuoso*. A French critic said of Thalberg, that he had estranged the

piano from its natural use, and made of it something outside real music ("en dehors de la musique"). It is difficult to see what the use of a musical instrument can be turned to if not to music, except that Thalberg may be said to use the composition too much as a means of showing off his *bravura*. But this is done every day, and although not less reprehensible on that account, it cannot be said to be a proceeding "outside real music."

As I have before mentioned, Prince Dietrichstein had settled a capital of £20,000 on Thalberg, who married, at Paris, not, as Fétis states, in 1845, but in 1843, Madame Boucher, the daughter of the famous Lablache, and the widow of a painter of merit who had been decorated with the Legion of Honour by the French Government for his picture 'La Mort du Maréchal Marceau.' Thalberg travelled through Belgium, Holland, England, and Russia in 1839, and Spain, 1845, and he went to Brazil, 1855, North America, 1856, and finally settled at Posilippo (Naples) in 1858. He appeared again in public in 1862, and in London in 1863 in the concerts arranged for him by his brother-in-law, Frederick Lablache, after which he lived in Naples as an "Oeconom" and winegrower.

The writer of these lines saw him in his house in that wonderfully picturesque position overlooking the Bay of Naples, opposite San Agata, and when taken by Thalberg all over the property, he could nowhere discover a trace of a piano. He had become famous through his music, he now wanted to make money, and money only, with his vines. His daughter (not by his legitimate wife, but by an Italian singer, Madame d'Angri) resembles him much. She destroyed what seemed a promising career as a *prima donna* by singing too early and straining her voice in parts too high for her *tessitura*, both common faults with present singers, who are always too anxious to reap before they have sown and before they have properly prepared, trained, and developed their voices by careful study, because they fancy that shouting high notes to elicit injudicious applause will make them celebrated singers. They utterly forget that the great models of Italian singers whom we have admired in this century owed their great glory and fortunes to a conscientious persevering preparation, and to the sacrifice of every enjoyment which interfered with the earnest fulfilment of their artistic duties.

Schumann, in an access of ill-humour ("böser Laune"), says that Thalberg keeps him in a certain tension of expectancy, not on account of the platitudes which are sure to come, but on account of the profound manner of their preparation, which warns you always

of the moment they are on the point of bursting upon you. He says: "Thalberg deceives you by brilliant hand and finger work in order to pass off his weak thoughts, and it is an interesting question to see how long the world will be pleased to put up with such mechanical music." It was Thalberg's Concerto which so irritated Schumann, who was afraid that in Paris, where celebrities are always spoilt, he might not sufficiently take heed of what more serious composers had there achieved, and that he would be led away by the pardonable weakness of preferring "the charming mortality of a flattered *virtuoso's* life to the questionable after-glory of a real composer's work." Whilst Madame Schumann was playing one of Thalberg's waltzes, Schumann laid a few roses on the desk, which accidentally slipped down on the keyboard. By a sudden jump of the left-hand in the bass Madame Schumann wounded her little finger with one of the thorns. To her anxiously inquiring lord she replied that nothing much was the matter, only a very slight accident, and that, like the waltzes themselves, there was no great suffering, only a few drops caused by rose-thorns.

Although those waltzes of Thalberg are not what you would call Viennese waltzes, yet they show that absolutely Viennese element, quite monopolised in that city, that hidden spring which lifts the left hand irresistibly to lift the dancer's foot. The Viennese, and the Viennese only, know how to dance, how to play, and how to write waltzes. No one equals Strauss's orchestra in that respect, and with no orchestra but a Viennese one could he perform it. The waltz is their idol, and it has been reproachfully stated by serious observers that the mass of them—of course there is no question about the *élite*, who are as studious, as serious, as laborious as the *élite* of the nation anywhere else—but the mass of them live for eating and dancing only. When the battle of Sădowa was lost, which at once threw Austria out of Germany, and brought it to the very feet of Prussia, upon which Austria used to look down rather haughtily, the sad news reached Vienna early in the morning; and the despair of the people, who were quite heartbroken, was absolutely universal. That lasted until three in the afternoon, when the terrible probability of Strauss's ball being countermanded diverted the attention of the politically stricken people, who began to think which would be the more awful calamity: the battle or the suspension of the ball. The afternoon passed in dreadful suspense, but the ball bills remained uncovered with the dreaded postponement. Then philosophy came to the aid of the young ladies, and from them spread to the young men. Would Austria regain German influence by

their not dancing? Would Sadowa not be a sad and accomplished fact whether they cried at home or not? Was it not best to bear up courageously and to gain strength by exercise? Thus good counsel prevailed, and the day that had dawned with consternation and despair heard the famous $\frac{3}{4}$ in the evening, and the tears dried on those pretty young cheeks glowing with excitement over the 'Blue Danube.' Hurrah for joy and youth! Take life easily! it lasts not one minute longer for all your sulking; say, like Maffio Orsini:

"Scherzo e bevo,
Derido gl' insani,
Che si dan
Del futuro pensier."

("I laugh and drink, and mock at people insane enough to care for what the future may bring.") So much for dancing. As for eating, I have the authority of an *aide-de-camp* of the Emperor Francis, who reigned over Austria during the Napoleonic wars, who is stated to have stood by the oven one day, there being no open fires at that time in Austria, when Count E., covered with mud, burst into the Burg (the Imperial Palace) and demanded an immediate audience of the Emperor. Brought into the presence of his Majesty, the following colloquy ensued:

"Well, what is the matter?"

"Your Majesty, I come from the battle-field, and I am grieved to say with terrible news."

"What has happened?"

"A battle has been fought, and——"

"Well?"

"And we are routed; the battle is lost."

"Lost? Quite lost?"

"Yes, your Majesty, quite lost."

"Nothing to be done? Nothing?"

"Your Majesty, I am deeply sorry to say, nothing."

"What, absolutely nothing? Let us then to dinner!"

Thalberg's first Caprice (E minor) contains a well-developed principal thought, and forms a piece sure to win loud approbation. It is not always a proof of the excellence of a composition that it produces a great effect under the hand of the composer. All that that proves, is the skill of the performer, and Schumann expresses the wish that Thalberg might furnish for the appreciation of the critic a piece thoroughly and equally well-written—not a piece here and there well-written and abounding in weak parts every now and then, and seemingly written by a man who had only done this work because he had

no other occupation. It is impossible here not to recall to mind the words with which the Frankfort Baron Rothschild introduced Thalberg to a rich banker of his acquaintance: "This is Mr. Thalberg, the great pianist, but, thanks to the Lord, he does not want it (hat's Gott sei Dank, nicht nöthig)." Schumann's wrath somehow relents when speaking of Thalberg's Variations on two Russian *motivos*—'Krasni sarafan' (red petticoat), which is not, as Schumann presumes, the "touching prayer of a child for a garment," as the very first words show: "A red petticoat *gave* me my mother," and the second theme being 'Boje Tsarja chranjee' (God save the Czar). Schumann thought the introduction, through which, every now and then, "the child's song appears like an angel's head, fanciful and effective. Equally tender and flexible are the variations, very musicianlike, well-flowing and altogether well rounded off. The *finale*, so short that the audience is sure to listen whether or no there is nothing more to follow before they should explode in spontaneous applause, is graceful, brilliant, noble indeed." These expressions seem certainly enthusiastic enough, and scarcely bear out the severity of his judgment when discoursing on the general qualities of the composer of the *concerto*.

As to Thalberg's Fantasias on *motivos* of the 'Huguenots,' and on Rossini's 'Mosè in Egitto,' the friends of Erard the French piano-maker fancied that Thalberg, who treated the 'Huguenots' Fantasia in the way he had marked out for himself, had written the brilliant octave repetition variation only for the purpose of showing off the *double échappement* of Erard. This is not likely. Thalberg was not so self-sacrificing. He had one thing in view, and that only, to find new forms, new effects, new surprises for the public. Schumann says that in this *fantasia* Thalberg reminds him of Goethe's saying: "Happy are those who by their birth are lifted beyond the lower stratum of humanity, who need not pass through those conditions in which many a good man anxiously passes all his life. Look at Thalberg! how entirely is he master of his language and his thoughts! What a man of the world! How easily does he entwine and undo the meshes! To him is known the smallest pulsation of the public, and he calculates his effects, now exciting, now calming, his audience; and thus nothing remains but boldly to confirm the enthusiasm excited by this *fantasia* in Paris."

Thalberg had the great art of composing works much more difficult in appearance than in reality. Just as Rossini knew so well how to write for the voice, so Thalberg knew how to write for the finger, I might say, for giving a voice to the finger. His

studies, incomparably easier than those of Moscheles and Chopin, sound as brilliantly as if they required the most persevering study to overcome their difficulties. That makes them grateful to play and pleasing to the ear. It has been said of the "Etudes" that they are graceful work for ladies, "for the tepid temperature of the drawing-room," not for the healthy atmosphere outside the house, and that vigorous men will not long stop with them. Yet those who will take the trouble to master them entirely, will find that they have acquired some useful knowledge thereby. Chopin's studies are more poetical, Cramer's are more matter of fact, Moscheles' are more difficult to conquer. Thalberg wrote especially Thalberg. His studies and his *art du chant* are only specimens of what *he* could do best. It is in one or another form his full, light, energetic and singing touch. His studies are the extract of his successes, of his glory, and of his very industrious hard work.

For be it well known, he worked at this perpetually. Thalberg was essentially the pianist of the French, who in art, politics, and life, know only one desire, "*Autre chose!*" It has often been said, and I think quite rightly, too, that what makes the French revolt against the *status quo* is not that they are dissatisfied with it, but that they want "something else" whatever they may have. Thalberg then was continually devising some surprising new effect, and thereby he was forced to find at every moment "*autre chose.*" It would not be courteous to the French ladies to say that that is just what suits their fickle nature, and that they too are in perpetual search of the "something else;" but Schumann, who knew human nature well, says, that to criticise Thalberg would be to risk the revolt against you of all French, German and foreign women. A contemptuous smile of the great French critics is all you would have for your pains. "Why, does he not deserve all the crowns and wreaths he was adorned with? Whoever wishes to progress and create new things must before all know all that is going on around him; Strauss as well as Beethoven, because Strauss is in his way the highest expression of his time. Thalberg sheds the lustre of his performance on whatever he may play, Beethoven or Dussek, Chopin or Hummel. He has melody in the way of the Italians, from eight bars to eight bars. He knows wonderfully how to dress his melodies, and there might perhaps be much to be said about the difference between a real composition and a conglomeration of that new-fashioned style; but there again the army of young ladies advance, and therefore nothing remains to be said but, 'He is a god,' when seated before the piano."

"The only way," says Schumann, "to get at the real value of a composition, is, to undress it, and when the jewelry, the brilliant, blinding embellishments are gone, then see what remains, what nature has done for it." In the same way spoke Rossini, when he once overheard a remark to the effect that Verdi's operas were always in brilliant costume or sounding armour, but that his (Rossini's) works were like an attractive young woman, quite simply dressed but handsome by nature. "And, better still," said Rossini, "if you could even do without the simple dress, and admire the forms when perfect without artificial help!"

Thalberg, like Beriot, once took a grand *motif* of Beethoven and distorted it into "effective variations." This enraged Schumann, as it would every true musician. But then, Thalberg had a certain mission of elegance and effect to pour a rain of rose-buds and rose-diamonds into the eager listener's ear. Enchant him for the moment and demand no more. His Viennese nature showed brilliantly in his waltzes, which were more really, more thoroughly, more undeniably waltz motives than Chopin's Mazurkas and Liszt's Hungarian Csardas, because Liszt and Chopin became thoroughly French in Paris, whilst Thalberg remained an Austrian, and to the Austrians belongs, as I said before, the exclusive talent of composing, dancing, and playing waltzes.

It is interesting to learn the opinion of Mendelssohn and Rubinstein, two great authorities in piano and in composition, on the relative merits of Liszt and Thalberg. Mendelssohn in his letters speaks of the "heathen scandal (Heidenscandal)," in the good and the bad sense of the word, created by Liszt at Leipsic. He declares Thalberg's calm ways and self-control much more worthy of the real *virtuoso*. Now compare with this Liszt's opinion of himself. Liszt has been heard to say, after Thalberg's immensely successful concerts given after his return from Paris to Vienna, that "he hoped to play as Thalberg did, when ever he (Listz) should be partly paralysed and limited to the use of one hand." Undoubtedly Liszt's execution was more brilliant, and particularly more crushing. The strings flew, the hammers broke; and thus Chopin once said to him: "I should prefer not playing in public: it unnerves me. You, if you cannot charm the audience, can at least astonish and crush them." Mendelssohn goes on to say in his comparison of the two men, that Liszt's compositions are *beneath* his performance, since before all "he lacks ideas of his own," all his writing aiming only at showing off his skill, whereas Thalberg's 'Donna del Lago,' for instance, is a work of the most brilliant effect, of an astonishing gradual increase of difficulties and ornamentation, and

of refined taste in every bar! "His paw (Faust) is as remarkable as the light deftness of his fingers." Yet Liszt's immense execution (Technik) is undeniable. Now set against this what Rubinstein said, when he was asked why in a programme of his recital he had put Thalberg's 'Don Juan' Fantasia immediately after Liszt's *fantasia* on *motivos* of the same opera: "Pour bien faire ressortir la différence entre cet épicier et le Dieu de la musique." It is unnecessary to point out that with Rubinstein the *Dieu de la musique* was Liszt, and Thalberg the *épicier!* Never perhaps have the merits of any two pianists given rise to more violent and sometimes to more amusing discussion.

At Vienna on one occasion two gentlemen had rather warm arguments as to who was the greater pianist of the two, when one of the two combatants admitted that he had *never heard either of them!* Tableau! So Mendelssohn, in speaking of the critics who compare those pianists, says: "They talk like two men who are both wrong and whom you die to interrupt at every sentence." In appearance Thalberg, a perfect aristocrat, never moved a muscle beyond his arms to the elbow. His body remained in one position, and whatever difficulties he had to render he was, or at any rate he appeared, unmoved, calm, master of the key-board, and what is more difficult, of himself. Liszt, with his long hair flying about at every *arpeggio* or scale, not to mention his restlessness when playing rapid octaves, studied his public nevertheless. He kept the audience well under his eye, he was not above playing certain little comedies, and he was happy to afford opportunities for scenes to be played by the audience; for instance, ladies threw themselves upon a glove of his, expressly forgotten on the piano, and tore it to shreds, which they divided among themselves as relics.

That may appear very foolish on the part of these ladies, as bad in fact on their part as on his. But they considered everything that he had touched, the moment they could lay their hands on it, their property, and—honesty among thieves—they fairly divided the spoil among themselves. Stealing, the Greeks said, is no crime, and cannot be punished, but on condition that you be clever enough not to allow yourself to be caught. Those who were caught were hanged, that was the law, not for stealing, but for not knowing how to save themselves. Enlightened philosophers like Prudhon even went so far as to say that possession is theft. His famous work, 'La Propriété c'est le Vol,' is well known. But I have known a greater philosopher than that. He was a Jew, and a tailor in a Russian provincial town. I wanted a waistcoat for a ball. I was then very young, and thought a vast deal of a white

silk waistcoat with silver buttons. So I went to him and communicated my wishes. But Moses sadly shook his head, and said he had no such material by him, when suddenly I espied a small piece of white silk with gold, evidently a piece of some old material for covering furniture. Instantly I resolved that this should cover my impatient heart, and I asked him would it be sufficient for a waistcoat, and what would it cost? I waited his decision with more anxiety than the verdict of a jury. Slowly came his words: "I think I might possibly do it. The price would be twenty silver roubles." "What," I exclaimed indignantly, "twenty roubles for this piece of silk? I bet my head, you thief, that you have stolen it—this is no stuff for waistcoats." Barely had I said the word, than I feared I had libelled him. But no such petty thought crossed the head of Moses; and the son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob rose to the occasion as follows: "Stolen, you say? Of course I have stolen it; but not for you—for me." What could I say? Opinions as to *meum* and *tuum* will differ so long as the globe turns in the spheres. Liszt too had no petty scruples, he rather encouraged such theft.

It was ground for a sensational paragraph. Thalberg thoroughly disdained such a petty course. Liszt heaped, as Mendelssohn and Schumann said, difficulty upon difficulty so as to furnish himself with the pretext of vanquishing them with his astounding mechanism. Excepting his smaller works, the arrangements of Schubert's songs, Rossini's *soirées musicales*, &c., or the little 'Lucia' Fantasia, which so pleased Mendelssohn with its *arpeggios* and shakes for the left hand, there are very few that *le commun des martyrs* of the pianist-world could even attempt to play. In his 'Puritani' Fantasia, and others, there are sometimes shakes for the last two fingers, extending over several printed pages, while the other fingers have totally different occupations, which he himself played divinely, his shake with the little finger being most stupendous—but who else could do it? His *concertos*, unpleasing and unmusical, requiring a strength and execution very rarely to be met with, are not grateful, while Thalberg's compositions are so to a high degree.

But if Thalberg was a thorough Viennese with his waltzes and his gay humour, he was a thorough artist all the same. Some of Liszt's *fantasias*, except the brilliant passages which dazzle the ear, even as tinsel dazzles the eye, are so wanting in real body, that they remind you of a certain sparkling claret, with a fine ruby colour but no warmth and no real stuff in it, or of that dinner that the miserly widow of a rich Austrian banker offered to a celebrated journalist, where there was so little offered him to eat

that he actually was hungry at the end of the meal. So when the lady of the house most courteously said to him, "I have been very happy to see you here, my dear sir; when will you do me the honour to dine with me again?" "Now at once," he said, to her amazement. Just so do these *fantasias* leave you with an empty, unsatisfied appetite.

In Thalberg's works, first of all, you find the fundamental basis of all music: singing. Where there is not one of those graceful little *andanti cantabili* which he ordinarily puts in the beginning of his pieces, one finger is sure to sing a *motif* which the others in varied modes accompany. Whether the figure be that of chromatic scales, as in the *Andante*, or the *motif* surrounded with *arpeggios*, like 'Mosè,' or interwoven in scales like the *menuet* of 'Don Giovanni,' or changing hands as in the 'Airs Russes,' or specially brilliantly arranged for the left hand to play the *motif*, with accompanying chords written on a second line, while the right hand plays a brilliant variation noted on a third line—as in his Fantasia on 'God save the Queen'—you always hear the two hands doing the work of three, sometimes you imagine that of four hands.

In Thalberg's Andante in D flat, he moreover imitated most elegantly and successfully the *fioriture* which Chopin loved so to adorn his plaintive melodies with.

Photography not having at that time taken the place in the artistic world it now occupies, the likenesses of artists depended on the skill of an engraver, like the wonderful portrait of Jenny Lind, engraved forty years ago at Vienna. That was the grand time for the lithographers. Kaiser and the famous Kriehuber made the most successful portraits both of Thalberg and Liszt, especially of the latter, who courted advertisement of every kind, as much as Thalberg treated it as beneath his dignity. Kriehuber made a charming group of Liszt, with Czerny, Ernst and others (including himself), and exhibited it at one of Liszt's night concerts (given between midnight and two A.M.). He there, too, portrayed Liszt in all kinds of costumes, even in his travelling coat, with a fur cap over his ears. He made a splendid portrait, too, of Thalberg, though this portrait has had very little publicity. Thalberg never encouraged hero-worship, on which Liszt fed so gluttonously. Thalberg was every inch a gentleman; Liszt, although the greatest pianist this century has known, undoubtedly a genius of interpretation, had nevertheless an undeniable admixture of charlatanism, and he played an uninterrupted comedy before the public, continually calculating his effects. Thalberg controlled and dominated that fire which seemed to consume Liszt.

The Heiress of Glenmahowley.

"Bob," said I, "this won't do; something must be done."

"It must," echoed Bob, as he puffed away from his pipe in a mouldy little sitting room in the Shamrock Arms, at Glenmahowley.

Glenmahowley attained any importance which it possessed by being the centre of an enormous area of peat cuttings and bog land which stretched away with exasperating monotony to the horizon, unbroken by the slightest irregularity. In one place only, along the Mountsimon Road, there was a single belt of thick woods, whose luxuriance only served to aggravate the hopeless waste around them. The village itself consisted of a long straggling line of thatched cottages, each with an open door, through which entered bare-legged children, gaunt pigs, cocks and hens, ragged-locking, short-piped men and slatternly women. Bob Elliott seemed rather to admire the aborigines. No doubt it tickled his vanity to hear admiring exclamations as we went down the street; such as "Look at him now; look at the illigant fut on him!" or, "Oh then, an' isn't he a beautiful gintleman entoirely!" But I don't care for these things. Besides, though far more handsome than Bob, my beauty is of an intellectual type, and is lost upon these savages. My nose is pronounced, my complexion pallid, and my head denotes considerable brain power. "There's no harm in the crayter!" was the least offensive of the opinions which these idiots expressed of me.

We had been located in this barbarous place about a week. Bob and I were second cousins, and a distant mutual relation whom neither of us had seen had bequeathed us each a small property in the West. The clearing-up of business attendant on this, and the necessity of consulting with the old lady's pragmatical country attorney, had kept us for a week in the Shamrock Arms, and promised to keep us for at least another one in that unenviable retreat, if we could survive the tedium of our existence so long.

"What can we do?" groaned Bob again.

"Where's Pendleton? Let's get Pendleton up and take a rise out of him," I suggested with a flickering attempt at vivacity. Pendleton was our fellow-lodger at the inn—a quiet young fellow of artistic proclivities, with a weakness for solitary rambles and seclusion. All our attempts to pump him had failed as yet to elicit any

explanation of the objects and aims which had led him to Glenmahowley, unless it were that its bleak morasses harmonised with his misanthropic turn of mind.

"It's no use," said my companion. "He's as dismal as a tombstone and as shy as a girl. I never saw such a fellow. I wanted him to come with me this morning when you were writing your letter and to aid and abet me in a little mild chaff with the two girls at the draper's—you need help against these Irish girls, you know—but he flushed up quite red and wouldn't hear of such a thing."

"No, he is hardly cut out for a lady-killer," I remarked, adjusting my necktie before the flyblown mirror, and practising a certain expression which I have found extremely effective with the weaker sex—a sort of Lara-like piratical cock of the eye which gives the impression of hidden griefs and a soul which spurns the commonplaces of existence. "Perhaps he will come in though, and play dummy whist."

"No, he never touches cards."

"Milksop!" I ejaculated. "We'll send for the landlord, Bob, and ask him if there is nothing we can see or do."

This was recognised to be the most rational proceeding under the circumstances, and a messenger was despatched in hot haste to summon Dennis O'Keefe, our worthy host. Let me remark, while he is shuffling upstairs in his slipshod carpet slippers, that I am the mortal known as John Vereker, barrister-at-law, popularly supposed to be a rising man, though the exact distance that I have risen during the four years that I have been in practice is not calculated to turn my brain. Several nice little actions have however during that time been taken against me, in county courts and otherwise, so that I have put the machinery of the law into motion, though my personal profit in the matter must be acknowledged to have been somewhat remote.

O'Keefe was a fine specimen of the aboriginal Celt—freckle-faced and rough-haired, with shrewd grey eyes and a deep rich, Milesian voice. "Good-morrow to ye, gintlemen," he began as he entered, his large flat feet and uncouth gait giving him a sort of plantigrade appearance. "What would your honours be afther to-day?"

"The very thing we wanted to ask you, O'Keefe," said Bob. "What in the world *are* we to do? Can't you suggest anything?"

"There's the church," remarked O'Keefe, scratching his red hair in perplexity. "'Tis a foine building. There was a gintleman came here the year before last just for to look at it. Maybe your honours——"

"Hang the church!" roared Bob, with as much vehemence as a Radical advocate for Disestablishment; "we were there five times last

week—in fact every day except Sunday. Try again, old Pict and Scot."

Our host, who was serenely indifferent to the many unintelligible epithets applied to him by Bob's exuberant fancy, pondered once more over the problem. "There's the hole in the bog," he suggested with diffidence. "The same where the boys threw Mr. Lyons of Glenmorris—bad scran to him!—afther they shot him. May be you'd loike to see where they found him wid his head in the mud, an' his feet stickin' up. Ah, it was a glad soight, sorrs, for the pisantry that had worked and slaved—the craturs—and then for him to step in wid a dirty foive and twinty per cint. reduction in the rint, and serve notices on them as wouldn't pay. Sure you could take your food—or a gossoon could carry it—and picnic by the hole."

"The prospect is alluring," I remarked, "but there seems to me to be too much chance of the inoffensive tillers of the soil taking a fancy to plant a couple more Saxons upside down in the bog-hole. I negative that suggestion."

"What are those trees to the eastward?" asked Bob. "Surely there is something to be seen down there."

"It's proivate. It's the Clairmont family's ground, an' you'd be shot as loike as not if you so much as put your nose over the wall."

"Pleasant land this, Jack!" remarked my companion ruefully. "I almost wish old O'Quibble would unearth a codocil leaving the place to somebody else."

"Ah sure you can't judge of the counthry now while its quoiet," said our host. "Wait till the throubles come round agin—next year maybe, or the year afther. It's a loively land when the bhoys is out —sorra a taste of scenery would you think about; and bein' landlords yourselves by that toime, you'd see the cream of the divarsion."

"How about these Clairmonts?" I asked at a venture. "Do they live upon their own land?"

"Begorra—you've got it there!" cried O'Keefe. "They do nothing *but* live on their own land. They've niver stirred off it for more'n fifteen years."

"Never stirred off it!"

"Sorra a fut beyond the park gates and the great brick wall. No man's oi has ever rested upon Miss Clairmont's face bar ould Dennis the lodgekeeper—the blackmouthed spalpeen—more be token they say she's grown into the purtiest girl in the county, forbye having foive and twinty thousand in her own right."

"What!" we both roared.

"Foive and twinty thousand pound," repeated O'Keefe solemnly; "and when her ould cat of a mother dies she'll come in for the whole family estate."

"What is she?" "Where is she?" "Who is she?" "What the devil is the matter with her?" shouted Bob and I, forming a sort of strophe and antistrophe to the landlord's chorus.

O'Keefe's account of the past history of the Clairmont family was a remarkable one, and when curtailed of his many Hibernian digressions and meanderings, amounted to this. A certain Major Clairmont had come into the county some sixteen years before, bearing with him a large sum in hard cash, a showy-looking wife of rather foreign appearance, and a pretty little daughter about two years old. Having expended a portion of the first item upon the purchase of a considerable estate near Glenmahowley, he had taken up his residence there, and awaited some recognition from the county families. This came soon enough in the case of the Major, who, as an old Guardsman, possessed a recognised social position, which was secured by his own many admirable qualities. It was different with Madame. The men might drink the old claret of the soldier, or take a day's shooting in his pheasant preserves, but their wives made no sign. Strange rumours were in circulation as to the antecedents of Mrs. C. Some said that she had been upon the stage before her marriage, some that her career had been more equivocal still. There were individuals who ventured to doubt that she possessed even now the little blue slip of paper which civilization demands. It was this rumour which some busybody brought to the ears of the Major, coupling with it the name of a neighbouring landed proprietor. The Major was a bull-necked, choleric man. He chose out his heaviest hunting crop, and galloped furiously down the avenue to interview the traducer of his wife's character. The lodgekeeper was surprised to see the veteran horseman reel in his saddle as he shot through the gates, and then fall backwards with a dull thud on to the dusty road. The local practitioner pronounced it to be apoplexy, while the family physician favoured heart disease—but whatever the cause, the Major's spirit had drifted far away from Glenmahowley. It was then that that fiery foreign strain which showed itself on his wife's face asserted itself in her character. She would live on the estates still because he had been fond of them, but her life should be spent in mourning her loss, and in educating her daughter in her own way. Above all, never should she again exchange word or look with any living being belonging to the county which had insulted her, and indirectly caused her husband's death. The great gates were walled up, and only small slits left through which provisions and other necessaries, ordered by Dennis the lodgekeeper, were handed. A formidable row of spikes was planted on the brick wall which had always surrounded the estate. In this extraordinary seclusion, cut off from the whole world, Mrs. Clairmont and her daughter had now

passed fifteen years of their lives unseen by human eyes, save those of the few English domestics who remained with them, and perhaps of an occasional daring urchin who might penetrate into the wood, which surrounded the great house. It was these irregular scouts no doubt who had brought word of the exceeding beauty of the young lady, though no adult male had ever yet had the privilege of being able to form an opinion upon it. She was at present close upon her eighteenth birthday.

Thus far O'Keefe; while Bob and I sat, with elbows upon the table and chins upon our hands, drinking in every word. Neither of us broke the silence for some little time after he had concluded. Bob Elliott puffed furiously at his pipe, while I looked dreamily out of the window at the thatched roofs of the cottages and the long monotonous stretch of bog land in the distance.

"She is beautiful?" asked Bob at last.

"She is that!"

"And rich?" I queried.

"Divil a doubt of it."

We relapsed into another silence, in the midst of which our worthy landlord, evidently thinking us the worst of company, stole out of the room, walking for some unknown reason upon the tips of his toes as if he were afraid of waking us.

Left to ourselves we became even more meditative than before. Bob strolled restlessly up and down in front of the door; I whistled and continued to stare out of the window. We were both lost in our own thoughts.

"Fancy a girl who has never even seen a male fellow-creature!" ejaculated Bob at last.

"Who is unfettered by the conventionalities of civilization!" said I.

"How artless she must be, and how simple!" remarked my companion, twisting his moustache.

"What a depth of pent-up affection there must be in that heart!" I exclaimed, with my corsair-like look of slumbrous passion.

"How charmingly childlike and romantic!" said Bob, smoothing his hair in the glass.

"How easy for a dashing young fellow to win!" I returned, smiling at my own reflection over Bob's shoulder.

It is a curious fact, that for the remainder of the day, though nothing in the shape of a distraction turned up, neither of us complained of the *ennui* of a residence in Glenmahowley. We both seemed suddenly reconciled to a contemplative existence, and even became tolerant of Pendleton, whose contentment under existing circumstances had struck us hitherto as nothing less than an insult.

He came in about supper-time with his sketch-book and his mud-bespattered boots, apparently as happy as if he were among the most artistic scenery in the world. If it were not for his shyness and reserve he would be rather a pleasant fellow—that is, in gentlemen's society, for his diffidence would ruin him among women. He is tall, slim, and fair-haired, rather a good-looking young man—decidedly more so than Bob.

I did not sleep very well that night, neither did my companion. He showed his tousled head round the corner of my door somewhere about two o'clock in the morning.

"Hullo, Jack," he said, "are you asleep?"

"No."

"What was the figure again?"

"Twenty-five," I growled.

"I thought it was twenty. Thanks! Good-night!"

"Good-night!" and the head disappeared like the apparition in 'Macbeth.' It was evident that our thoughts were running in very much the same groove. As for me, my plans were matured, and I could afford to smile at Bob's cogitations. While he hankered aimlessly for the prize I should swoop down and carry it off. The Verekers were always noted for their iron determination. I chuckled to myself while I dropped to sleep as I thought of the march which I should steal upon him on the morrow.

The day broke without a cloud on the sky. Both Elliott and Pendleton were somewhat silent at breakfast, and as I was engaged in planning the details of the enterprise to which I had determined to commit myself, I did not attempt to enter into conversation with them. After the meal Pendleton remarked that he would take a short stroll in search of effects, and Bob almost immediately afterwards sallied out for a mouthful of fresh air. This was a most unexpected piece of luck. I had ransacked my brain for some excuse which would enable me to get rid of my companion, and here he had solved the problem of his own accord. Giving him half an hour's grace to take him well out of the way, I slipped out through the back-door of the Shamrock Arms and made my way rapidly down the Morristown Road in the direction of the Clairmont estate.

My sole doubt and anxiety was as to how I was to succeed in obtaining an interview with the young lady. Should fortune befriend me in that matter the rest appeared simple enough. I pictured to myself her mental condition, the sense of desolation which must oppress her young soul. Cooped up away from the world, her heart must yearn for some manly bosom upon which to rest her head, some strong arm to break her fetters. Besides, I was a man with exceptional personal advantages. Without being

conceited, I have a just appreciation of my own merits. To eyes accustomed to nothing but an occasional glance of Dennis the lodgekeeper I should appear an Adonis. By-the-way, how about Dennis? Might he not resent my intrusion? Pooh! he was an old man. I remember the landlord saying so. What would I not risk for the girl whom I was prepared to adore! Perhaps he would have a gun though! These Irishmen are hotheaded and bloodthirsty. I grew thoughtful and slackened my pace.

By this time I had come to the place where a high brick wall, with a conical coping bristling with spikes and pieces of broken bottles, ran along by the side of the road. This I recognised from O'Keefe's description as being the boundary line of the Clairmont estate. At the other side of the wall there was, as far as I could see, a thick forest. Should I do it, or should I not? I thought of the five and twenty thousand pounds. Besides, what would a gatekeeper be doing with a gun! What a sell for Bob Elliott—and for Pendleton, the shy Pendleton! Would they not curse their want of energy when they saw the prize which had slipped through their fingers? How the fellows would talk in London, too, even if I failed! It would make my name as a Don Juan. I could imagine Clinker or Waterhouse or some of the old set coming into the Temple wine bar and beginning. "I say, you chaps, have you heard of Vereker's latest? Very devil among women, is Vereker. He was in Ireland a few weeks ago"—and so on, and so on. "By Jove!" I cried, as I approached the wall in a paroxysm of recklessness, "I'll do it if I have to skin my knee!"

I did skin my knee, in fact I skinned them both. I also removed portions of integument from my scalp, shoulder, elbow, hand and ancle, besides splitting my coat and losing my hat. I was recompensed for all this, however, as I sat astride upon the top of the wall and looked down into the forbidden land beyond. I could have laughed at the thought of the march I was stealing on my two companions. I would have done so had it not been for a spike which was running into the calf of my leg.

The drop on the other side did not look very deep. I held on to the largest projection I could see, and lowered myself until my feet were not more than a yard or so from the ground. Then I let go, but only to find that I hung suspended by a hook which had passed though my waist-band. This impediment however gave way, and I fell with a crash for about nine feet into a sort of trench, which had been dug apparently all round the inner side of the wall, and was so artistically covered with grass and sticks that it was impossible to detect it from the top. All this I discovered after I crawled out of it, for during the few minutes that I lay at the bottom every idea

was shaken out of my head beyond a general impression that I had been struck by lightning.

The trees grew so thickly together that it was impossible to see for any distance into the wood, and the brushwood was so dense that it was no easy matter to move in any direction. After emerging from the ditch I hesitated for a moment as to my next step, and then was about to keep to what appeared to be some sort of path on the left when my eye was attracted by a small placard attached to the trunk of a tree. I made my way towards it eagerly, pushing aside the intervening briars and brambles. It might contain some directions which would enable me to find my way, or—romantic thought!—it might be that the lonely Beatrice I was in search of had inscribed her pinings and longings where they might meet the eye of an adventurous stranger. As I stood before the inscription and read it, I felt a kind of cold flush, if the expression be permissible, pass along my spine and up to the roots of my hair, while my knees, or what was left of them, knocked together like castanets. Scrawled upon the paper in a rough bold hand were the three words, "Blood-hounds—Spring-guns—Mantraps"—unpleasant words at any time, but most particularly so amid the gloom of a forest with a ten-foot wall in one's rear. The announcement was a concise one, and yet I felt as I reperused it that it contained more food for reflection than any volume which I had ever read. Was I to abandon my enterprise now that the first difficulty had been successfully overcome? Possibly the notice was a mere empty threat. Surely no one would allow such things to remain in their shrubberies. The combination of ideas was so dreadful. Suppose that I was caught in a mantraps whatever that might be, and was then attacked by a bloodhound. The mere supposition made me shudder. But then if these frightful dogs were really roaming about over the forest, how was it that none of them were shot by the spring-guns or caught in the traps? This consideration revived my drooping spirits, and I pushed on through the thick underwood.

As I advanced it opened up somewhat, so that I made better progress. A few half-overgrown paths meandered here and there, but I avoided these and kept under the concealment of the trees. Never shall I forget that dreadful walk! Every time a twig snapped I sprang into the air under the impression that I was shot. No hero of romance ever underwent such an ordeal for his lady, and indeed no lady was ever worth it. Five and twenty thousand pounds however are enough to steel the heart of the most timorous, but even they would hardly recompense me for the frights which were in store for me.

I had got to one of the deepest and one of the most secluded parts

of the wood, when I stopped suddenly and crouched down, trembling in every limb. Was it the sound of footsteps which had been wafted towards me on the breeze? I listened intently, and then with a long sigh of relief was about to rise, convinced that I had been mistaken, when the same sound came to my ears, but much louder than before. There could be no question that it was approaching me. I lay down upon my face among the prickly brambles, hoping to escape observation. The footsteps continued to come nearer and nearer. They were those of a man—but put down stealthily and softly as if he were also shunning observation. Could it be that some ruffian had observed me and was hunting me down as one stalks a deer? He was coming nearer and nearer. I could hear the rustle of the leaves as he brushed past them. It seemed to me that I could even distinguish the sound of his breathing. Nearer he came and nearer still—he was close to me, and the next moment the brambles in front of me parted and a man stepped out almost upon the top of me, and staggered back with a shout as I sprang to my feet. The voice seemed familiar—so did the figure. Could it be! Yes; there was no mistaking the identity of Mr. Robert Elliott of Lincoln's Inn.

Sed quantum mutatus ab illo! The stylish coat was torn and covered with mud. The aristocratic face was stained with dust and perspiration, and interlaced with scratches where the brambles had left their mark. His hat had been knocked in and was ahopeles s wreck. His watchguard and the studs in his shirt seemed to stand out as oases of respectability in a great desert of desolation.

"Bob!" I ejaculated.

It was a few moments before any sign of recognition came over his face. Then gradually the ghost of a smile appeared in his astonished eyes, which deepened and deepened until he burst into an uproarious fit of laughter.

"Vereker, by Jove!" he yelled. "What ever have you been doing to yourself?"

I looked down at my own costume and was forced to acknowledge that there was very little to choose between us. What with the wall and the ditch and the underwood and the briars, there was hardly an article of clothing which was fit to be worn again. The two of us looked more like a couple of scarecrows on tramp and in search of employment, than two prominent members of the junior bar.

"What are you doing here, Elliott?" I asked.

"Exploring," he answered evasively; "what are you?"

"Explor— No, hang it, why can't we be frank to one another, Bob? You know very well you came after that girl."

My companion looked sheepish. "Well, I suppose you did the same?" he said.

"Of course I did. What fools we were to try and bamboozle each other! If we had stuck together we might never have got into such a plight."

"I'm very sure I should never have tumbled into that infernal ditch if I had seen you go in," said Bob ruefully.

"Oh, you've been in the ditch too, have you?" I remarked, with the first approach to satisfaction which I had felt since I left O'Keefe's hospitable roof.

"Yes," groaned Bob. "I think I have been through the whole performance. Did you see any notices on the trees?"

"I did."

"Has old Dennis been round to you yet?"

"No; have you seen him!"

"Yes; he passed within ten yards of me a short time ago. At least I suppose it was him—a big gaunt fellow with a great stick."

"Heaven save us!" I ejaculated.

"However he has passed now, and the question is what are we to do?"

"Persevere," I responded manfully. "It would be more dangerous to go back than to go on since that truculent gatekeeper is behind us."

"Right you are!" said Elliott, with a melancholy attempt at cheerfulness. "You lead on, and I'll follow."

"No, you go first," I answered, not I am bound to say from any innate courtesy or feeling of politeness, but with an idea that dangers from the abominations mentioned on the placard would be lessened thereby.

We threaded our way through the forest in Indian file, and after advancing for about half a mile were evidently close to the edge of it. The trees were smaller and the unplanted spaces larger. Suddenly Bob pulled up and pointed in front of him.

"There's the house," he said.

There it was sure enough, a stern looking edifice of grey stone with a large number of small glimmering windows. There was a lawn in front of it, very tastefully laid out, which somewhat relieved the gloomy and prison-like appearance of the building. No one was to be seen either outside or at the windows. We held a council of war as to what our next step should be.

"We can't walk right up to the house under some excuse or other, can we?" said Bob.

"It would be too dangerous," I remarked. "There is no saying what they might do to us. They seem to be very savage people."

"Besides, it would be the very last way to have any chance of saying a few words to the young lady," added my companion.

"The whole thing makes a deuced romantic situation," I observed.

"I wonder what Pendleton would think of us if he saw us?"

"Poor shy Pendleton! I think he would put us both down as madmen."

"It's a pity he's so retiring," said Bob. "But I say, Jack, what do you intend to say to the young lady when you see her?"

"Why, I propose to tell her of my love straight off, and ask her to fly with me. It must be all done to-day. I'm not coming in here again on any consideration. Besides, I think it will not be difficult to carry a romantic girl of that sort by a kind of *coup de main*."

"But that's exactly my plan," said Bob plaintively.

"The deuce it is?" I ejaculated. "By George! There she is!"

The last exclamation was drawn from me by the appearance, upon the steps of the house, of an elegantly-dressed young lady. Her features were invisible, owing to the distance, but her erect carriage and the long, graceful curves of her figure showed that report had not exaggerated her charms. She turned as she came out to address an elder woman, her mother probably, who followed her. The latter seemed, as far as we could make out, to be weeping, for she raised her handkerchief to her eyes several times, while the girl passed her arm round her neck as if to console her. In this she appeared to succeed, for the elder went back into the house, and the younger sprang down the three steps at a single bound and hurried away with long elastic steps down the path which led into the shrubbery.

"We must follow her!" I cried.

"Take your time," said Bob. "We must come to some agreement before we start. It would be too ridiculous for the two of us to plunge at her together and begin pouring out two confessions of love."

"It might startle her," I remarked, "especially as she has never seen either of us before."

"Who is to have the preference then?"

"I am the elder," I observed.

"But then I left the inn first," objected Elliott.

"Well, suppose we toss for it."

"I suppose we must," said Bob gloomily, producing a penny and spinning it up in the air. "Heads, so it is. Just my luck. Of course, if after your proposal the young lady thinks fit to refuse you, I am at liberty to do whatever I choose. Is that agreed?"

"Certainly," I answered, and we both pushed on rapidly through the shrubbery, gaining confidence as we saw some prospect of attaining our object.

"There she is!" whispered Bob, as we saw the flutter of a pink dress among the trees in front of us."

"There's a man talking to her!"

"Impossible!"

"There is."

If there was he must have disappeared very rapidly on hearing our approach, for when we got near enough to her to see her whole figure she was alone. She turned with a start of surprise, and seemed inclined for a moment to run away from us, but then recovering herself she came towards us. As she advanced I saw that she was one of the most lovely girls that I had ever seen in my life—not at all the doll-like sort of beauty that I had imagined from what I knew of her training, but a splendid, well-developed young woman with a firmly set lower jaw and delicately moulded chin which would have been almost masculine in their force had they not been relieved by a pair of pensive blue eyes and a sweetly sensitive mouth. Somehow, as I found her steady gaze directed at me, all the well-turned speeches which I had rehearsed in my mind seemed to fade entirely from my memory and leave nothing but an utter blank behind. The amorous gallop with which we bore down upon her subsided into a ridiculous trot, and when eventually I pulled up a few yards in front of her I could no more have uttered a word of explanation than I could have recovered my lost hat or concealed the gaps in my clothing.

"I fancy you must have mistaken your way," she said in a low sweet voice without the slightest appearance of being affected by this apparition of young men.

I felt Bob nudge me from behind and whisper something about "going ahead" and "making the running," but my only inclination under the gaze of those calm, tranquil eyes was to make the running in the opposite direction at the top of my speed.

"The house is over there," she observed, pointing through the trees. "I suppose that you are the bailiffs."

"Bailiffs!" I gasped.

"Excuse me if I do not give you your proper title," she continued with a melancholy smile. "It is the first time that we have ever been brought in contact with the officers of the law, and hardly know how to address them. We have expected you for two days."

Bob and I could only stare at her in silent bewilderment.

"There is one thing I should like to ask you," she went on, drawing nearer to us with her hands clasped and a beautiful pleading expression upon her face. "Though my mother and I are almost beggars now, remember that she is a lady, delicately reared and sensitive. Above all, remember that she has no one to protect her or to take her part. Be gentle with her therefore, and do your duty without wounding her feelings more than you can help."

"Bob," I whispered, drawing my companion aside, though he still continued to stare idiotically over my shoulder at the young lady. "Do you realise it? They expect the bailiffs. There's no money in the concern. What are we to do?"

"She's an angel!" was all Bob could evolve.

"So she is, but she's got no money."

"Then you give her up?"

"I do," said I with a sentimental twinge at my heart. Sentimentalism has always been my weak point.

"You won't propose?" asked Bob excitedly.

"No, marriage is an expensive luxury. Besides——"

"Besides what?"

"I am convinced she would not have me."

"Then, by Jove, I'll do it!" said Bob, facing round with a look of determination upon his dirty face.

Miss Clairmont had been standing looking considerably surprised and a little frightened during our hurried conclave. She drew back a few feet as Bob took a step towards her with his two arms thrown out in eloquent entreaty like an animated semaphore.

"Young lady," he began, "I am not a bailiff. I belong to another and a higher branch of the legal profession. I am a Londoner and a gentleman."

Bob paused for a moment to allow this statement to sink into his listener's mind. Miss Clairmont looked more amazed than impressed, though it was evident from her shrinking figure that she was considerably startled.

"In a foreign land," cried Bob, warming to his work—"a land beyond the seas—I allude to England—I heard of your charms and of your solitary existence, and I swore—that is to say, we both did, only I lost the toss,—to save you and bring you out into the great world which you are so fitted to adorn. We crossed the deep—which made us both exceedingly unwell,—and flew to your rescue. We have scaled this inhospitable wall of yours; if you doubt my statement you will find a large portion of the sleeve of my coat upon one of the spikes which adorn it. We also ran the gauntlet of the many unpleasant things which your amiable parent seems to have littered about for the benefit of the casual stranger. Dear girl," continued Bob advancing with an imbecile grin upon his countenance, which he imagined no doubt to be a seductive smile, "fly with me! Be mine! Share with me the wild free life of a barrister! Say that you return the love which consumes my heart—oh, say it!" Here Bob put his hand over a hole in his waistcoat and struck a dramatic attitude.

During this extraordinary address the young lady had been

gradually edging away from us, and at its conclusion she burst into a merry peal of laughter.

"Edward!" she cried—"Ned! Do come out! It's really too ridiculous, but I don't know what to say to them."

At this summons a man emerged from behind a tree where he had concealed himself, and flew to her side. Imagine our petrifying and all-absorbing astonishment when we recognised in him Pendleton, our retiring companion of the inn.

"Don't be frightened, darling," he said passing his arm round her slender waist, to Bob's intense and audible disgust. "I can understand, gentlemen," he went on, "the romantic motives which have led you here, but you will see how futile they are when I tell you that this lady is my wife."

"Your what?" roared Bob and I in chorus.

"My wedded wife. You are the first that have heard our secret, though Mrs. Clairmont must learn it to-day. It does not matter to you how we met or how we married—suffice it that it is so. To-day the ruin which I had long foreseen has come upon the household; Mrs. Pendleton thinks it may have softened the hard heart of her mother, and we are going up now to see her together, to confess what we have done, and to offer her a home for the rest of her life at my place in Devon. You will see, gentlemen," he continued, "that a delicate matter of the sort must be done without interruption and at once; you will therefore excuse us from showing you off the grounds. I may say, however, that if you will keep to that path on the left you will soon find yourselves at the boundary—and now, gentlemen, my wife and myself must wish you a very good-morning," with which he offered the young lady his arm and the two strolled off together in the direction of the house.

How long Bob and I stood there gazing after them and at each other, neither of us could ever determine. Then we plodded sullenly down the path pointed out, without exchanging a word, and after sundry gymnastic exercises found ourselves in the road once more.

Bob was inclined to be sentimental all day, and perhaps I was hardly myself either. When night fell however, and a steaming jug of hot water was brought up, flanked with a lemon on one side and the sugar on the other, while the whisky bottle towered in the rear, we began to get over our troubles; and I doubt if O'Keefe, when he joined us, could have given a guess at the stirring events which had occurred since he told us the story of the Clairmont family the night before. Certainly by next morning there were no traces left of our short matrimonial campaign.

Another week found us in our chambers in town, settling down comfortably into the old routine. I do not know where our

next holiday will be spent, but I can confidently predict that it will *not* be at Glenmahowley. I have heard nothing since of the Pendletons beyond the fact that he is the owner of a large estate on the borders of Dartmoor. Bob talks of visiting those parts in the spring, but I think for his own peace of mind he had better steer clear of those blue eyes and sweet features which are our only pleasant recollection of the land of bogs.

What Shall I Drink?

What shall I drink? is the great question of the day. The newspapers, in what is erroneously called "the silly season," are filled with the most valuable suggestions as to what we are to eat, drink, and avoid. As I am satisfied with the plainest food, the eating question does not trouble my mind. What shall I drink? is what my puzzled intellect is in search of. I was a water-drinker, but a sharp attack of typhoid made me rather doubt the health-giving qualities of that pure element. At this time Mr. Gladstone brought forward his celebrated measure for the introduction of French wines in this country at the cheapest possible rate. He depicted the blessings of very light claret in such glowing terms that I candidly confess that I thought the drink of the future was discovered. A sad disappointment awaited me; everything is disappointing in this best of all possible worlds. A wine merchant sent the late Lord Derby a sample of this choice vintage, kindly informing him that it would cure him of the disorder under which he was suffering. Lord Derby tasted it, sent it back, ungratefully remarking that he preferred the gout. It had a most disturbing effect on me, and I solemnly believe that since the creation of the world nobody has caused such commotion in the stomachs and minds of mankind as the "grand old man." I then had to change my beverage, and, after a short career of burgundy and hock, I discovered that champagne was the most delightful and healthiest of drinks, a beaker of dry, but not too dry, became the solace of my life. The question of what I should drink was solved. But a new trouble arose. I reside at an ecclesiastical watering-place which has the purest air and the fiercest population of any town in England. How they do quarrel at Dullmouth! The local Parliament sometimes resemble the House of Commons, when all the Irish members are on their legs. They fight about everything, High Church, Low Church, vivisection, railway stations, Father Ignatius, pavement, and last, but not least, the "escaped nun." When Father Ignatius comes to lecture about religion, and the "escaped nun" to unfold her persecutions, the meetings generally end in a free fight. The visit of Oscar Wilde has lately poured some oil on the troubled

waters, and there are a few signs of the approaching appearance of calm. The whist-room at the club is, I am told, the only quiet spot in Dullmouth: all is tranquil there; signals for trumps unattended to occasion no harsh remark; revokes are condoned, and every thing is a combination of "sweetness and light." After the escaped nun and Father Ignatius had disappeared awhile from the scene, the celebrated Reverend Ebenezer Shout, the temperance lecturer, came to improve the minds of the Dullmouthians. Of course I attended his meeting (there is nothing to do at Dullmouth but attend meetings), and there I heard, to my horror, the Reverend Ebenezer strongly express his conviction that everybody who adhered to the cursed custom of imbibing alcohol would not only be tortured internally in this world, but would frizzle eternally in the next. I always thought myself a temperate man, but it appears I am worse than the irreclaimable drunkard. I am a moderate drinker, an object of abhorrence to every well constituted mind.

What shall I drink? Frightened, I sought refuge in the celebrated firm of Cooper, Cooper & Co., which advertises that it sells teas to dukes, earls, barons, and county families. As I adore the aristocracy, I thought that this was the drink for me. I must say the tea was excellent, fit to be drunk not only by dukes, earls, barons, and county families, but by emperors and kings. I drank this delicious beverage for some time, until one morning, when I was sipping my "Cooper, Cooper," and thinking that a "female markis" might be engaged in the same delightful occupation, I took up my morning paper the 'Daily Oracle,' and saw at the head of a column, "The Deadly Cup." Of course I thought that this was a letter from the Reverend Ebenezer dilating on the horrors of alcohol. Not a bit of it; it was a letter from a high functionary describing in the most vivid terms the evils inflicted on mankind by the use and abuse of tea. It not only, he says, makes a cantankerous mind, but it is the breeder of revolutionary sentiments. I a revolutionist, I who read every word of every speech delivered by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett! Then I take up the *Medical Times* which thus discourses on drink:

"After all has been said and done that can be said and done in the cause of total abstinence and on the subject of alcohol-beverages, after the fever and fashion of this our day has changed and subsided, we believe that beer will still be found to be the national drink of the future, as it has been of the past in this country. Tea and coffee if universally drunk—solutions of tannin with a small and varying amount of more or less harmful alkaloid—would cause such an increase of national dyspepsia and nervous troubles that a new crusade with the Dean of Bangor as its 'Peter the Hermit' would soon drive them from their position as national beverages.

Neither they nor milk can be provided good in sufficient quantity and at the price required, and milk is not always tolerated by grown-up stomachs. Oatmeal and water would soon pall upon the most enthusiastic palate; sweet syrups and acid effervescents can scarcely be habitually consumed without derangement of the gastric functions; as for water—the best of drinks when at its best—sanitation will have to make very long strides indeed before it can be regarded as anything but the most perilous of thirst quenchers."

Here are new horrors unfolded! Tea and coffee bring dyspepsia and nervous troubles, whilst syrups and acid effervescents are destructive of the gastric functions! What the gastric functions are I am at a loss to imagine, but I suppose I ought to keep them in order; the intemperance of certain temperance orators is fully explained—their gastric functions are disordered.

The *Medical Times* further states:

"If a committee of unprejudiced scientific men had been appointed to compound and recommend a perfectly aseptic drink combining the qualities of nutrition and palatability with such small amount of alcohol as should act as a preservative to the fluid itself, an aid to digestion and a mild and innocuous stimulant to the whole system, it is probably upon a light bitter beer, brewed from good malt and hops, that the seal of approval would be placed. Formed as it is, from wholesome and indigenous materials, easily concocted, harmless except in only impossible quantity, it is just such an ideal drink that we should pine for, if we did not already possess it."

A youth the other day when undergoing that awful ordeal, a competitive examination, was asked to mention "some of the chief benefactors of the human race." It was very hot weather, and the unhesitating reply was "Bass and Allsopp." The founders of an ideal drink are the chief benefactors of the human race, and yet the youth was plucked! I never did believe in competitive examinations.

I am sure Lord Macaulay would have sympathised with this unfortunate young man, for nobody, except perhaps Mrs. Siddons, who in a pause of conversation at a dinner-party was heard to exclaim in the most solemn tone, "I do love ale dearly," enjoyed his beer so much. He revelled in the celebrated audit ale of Trinity, which may have been nutritive, but certainly was not light. When Lord Macaulay first visited Bowood, he seriously feared he should not be able to procure his favourite beverage, but he was quickly reassured.

Lord Macaulay writes:

"We have oceans of beer and mountains of potatoes for dinner. Indeed Lady Lansdowne drank beer most heartily on the only day which she passed with us, and, when I told her, laughing, that this set me at ease

on a point which had given me so much trouble, she said that she would never suffer any dandy novelist to rob her of her beer or her cheese."

The dandy novelist had a horror of beer and cheese. People are prejudiced. Beau Brummel had a horror of vegetables, although he confessed to having once eaten a pea. He broke off an engagement with a young lady because "the wretch ate cabbage." I think that Lady Lansdowne, Mrs. Siddons, and Macaulay would have been surprised to hear that not only were they shocking the sensitive nerves of a novelist, but that they were the abettors of vice. For it is the moderate drinker that the Reverend Ebenezer Shout and his followers are attempting to extirpate. He is held up to execration as a decoy-duck for inebriety. What shall I drink? If I follow the advice, or am frightened by the threats, of the Reverend Ebenezer, I am, if the *Medical Times* is to be believed, for the future to partake of nothing but solutions of tannin and harmful alkaloid, water the perilous thirst quencher, sweet syrups and acid effervescents. A so-called temperance orator, the other day, not only demanded that the moderate drinker should be crushed, but actually went on to say that light literature and cards should be tabooed. In fact we are rapidly approaching the time predicted by Sydney Smith, when elderly gentlemen will have to play their rubber on the hillside with pickets on the look-out for the police.

If these total abstinence orators had their way, and hanged every brewer in the country (and no doubt a great many brewers deserve to be hanged), and imprisoned hop and barley growers, shut up public-houses, and allowed no drink to be sold at all, do they imagine that the country would become sober? All history is opposed to this view. The Republic of Venice, in order to improve the morals of that very immoral city, shipped off all women of a *certain class* to an island (Cyprus I presume). The consequences were disastrous: the peace of families was destroyed, relationship was not respected, and the convents were turned into disorderly houses. The Republic, convinced of the mistake it had committed, petitioned their "well-beloved *meretrici*" to return, but they were so very prosperous and contented in their island that they positively refused to move. Here a praiseworthy attempt to put down vice by compulsion utterly failed. How would the total abstinence people succeed in preventing by law the moderate drinker of two or three glasses of wine from obtaining what he naturally desires? Men will drink, and when there is a demand there will be a supply.

A great many persons take the pledge of total abstinence, but

how many keep it? I happened to be at Norwood when the Salvation Army went to the Crystal Palace with drums and trumpets. By-the-bye, why should temperance people be accompanied by such discordant music? Theodore Hook was sitting at his club window when a temperance band passed. "I don't make such a row as that," said Theodore, "when I am sober." The Salvationists had their gala day, and all passed off apparently well; but there was a report—it may be a libellous report—that the drink department had a most satisfactory day. The following anecdote I heard from a teetotal friend, who is a great temperance orator. A gentleman took the pledge the other day, but somehow his abstinence from the moderate quantity of wine he was accustomed to drink did not agree with him. His doctor was sent for, who recommended a slight alcoholic stimulant. This advice was received with horror. "How can I," said the sick man, "violate my vow? I have forbidden my servants the beer which they love so well, and I am going to preside at a Blue Ribbon meeting next week." "All I can say," said the doctor, "is that a stimulant is necessary for your health. You had better get a bottle of whiskey, and hide it away, and when your shaving water comes up, just mix yourself a tumbler of whiskey and water." The doctor departed, and meeting his patient's servant a week afterwards, he asked him how his master was going on. "Oh, very well as to bodily health," was the reply, "but between you and me, sir, I think he has gone wrong in the head—he has taken to shaving himself six times a day!" I read in an American paper an amusing account of another convert who addressed a total abstinence meeting as follows: "The first week I took the pledge I saved enough money to buy a waistcoat; the next week I bought a coat; the next week I bought a pair of breeches (great cheering, especially from the ladies); then, ladies and gentlemen, I bought a coffin (here took place what the French call *mouvemens divers*), because I am certain that if I kept the pledge another week I should want it." Never since the celebrated banquet of Macbeth, did a meeting break up in more admired disorder.

In the state of Maine, where a law of total prohibition prevails, anybody can procure drink by subterfuge. I saw an account of a man arriving in a village and setting up a tent where he announced that a wolf was on view. A great many people seemed curiously anxious to see the animal, and it was observed they were not content with one interview, but that they repeated their visits, till the secret was discovered by one of the sightseers rolling strangely on his legs, hiccuping out, "I am gwine to have

another look at the wolf." A keg of very dubious whiskey had been the attraction.

The Bishop of Peterborough has been much abused for having said that he would rather see England free than sober. Undoubtedly the Bishop was right. If the drinking of wine and beer was prohibited by Act of Parliament, secret drinking would take place, and England would become the most hypocritical nation under the face of the sun. During the Commonwealth such a law was never dreamt of, and the most sober and God-fearing army the world ever saw used to drink ale out of their black jacks with the greatest satisfaction; but then it will be said by some fanatical orator that Oliver Cromwell was a gentleman connected with "the liquor interest." I am a temperate man, and have always obeyed the law, but if prohibited from drinking that which I like, I should be sorely tempted "to have another look at the wolf."

If the Reverend Ebenezer Shout and his followers are to be believed, all England is given up to an insane worship of Bacchus. On the contrary, the improvement in the upper and middle classes has been immense with regard to drink. Whoever sees at dinner-parties now a drunken man? and then remember what took place in the good old times. Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Lords Stowell and Eldon, drank quantities of wine that makes one shudder to read about. Lord Stowell was a four-bottle man, and he said of Lord Eldon, "My brother will take any *given* quantity," but these drinkers were far exceeded by the Scotch. I have lately been reading a book which had not much success when it appeared, 'Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents.' There is in this book an account of drinking-bouts which are almost incredible, even after reading the 'Memoirs' of Lord Cockburn. Mr. A. G. Hunter, a Forfarshire laird, and partner in the great bookselling firm of Constable & Co., gives an awful description of the hospitable treatment of Mr. Longman in the year 1806. Mr. Longman was on a tour in the north of Scotland. It would have been safer for him to have fallen amongst thieves than Forfarshire lairds.

Mr. Hunter writes:

"We dined at Eskmount on Sunday. On Monday we went to Brechin, dined at the Castle, and stayed all night. Maule was, as usual, very attentive; we had a strong party to dinner, and a good drink till ten or so, but nobody was completely pounded. *Longman did very well.*"

The dinner-hour in Scotland was three o'clock, so that

Mr. Longman, the quietest of men, must have been forced to drink an immoderate quantity of wine.

Mr. Hunter continues:

"We had a dreadful day at Brechin Castle * that day I wrote you; one of the most awful ever known, even in that house. What think you of seven of us drinking thirty-one bottles of red champagne, besides burgundy, madeira, &c., &c.? Nine bottles were drunk by us when Maule was pounded, (he had been leading a terrible life for three weeks preceding,) and of all this Murray contrived to take his share. How he got it over, God knows, but he has since paid for it very dearly."

I wonder how many bottles of whiskey were included in "&c., &c.," for it was the fashion of the time to finish their carouses with copious draughts of mountain dew in order to correct the acidity caused by their potations.

Mr. Hunter again writes about his victim:

"He has since been close at home at Eskmount very unwell; but yesterday I had him physicked; and to-day we dine with Major Ramsay at Kelty, from which God send us a happy deliverance. To-morrow we go to the Beefsteak Club and ball at Forfar."

They must have had a strong constitution who survived the Major and the Beefsteak Club. Some, indeed, seem to have suffered seriously from the Major's hospitality, as it is related that one was pounded, and Mr. Hunter had great difficulty in getting him afloat again. But the Beefsteak Club seems to have been a disastrous climax, as Mr. Hunter talks with respectful pity of the "unfortunate Londoner" who was unable to enjoy a cool bowl of punch provided for his morning's drink! I think such campaigns were quite as perilous undertakings as Napoleon's expedition to Russia.

But the great drinker in Scotland was the celebrated judge George Fergusson, Lord Hermand, whose character is delightfully portrayed by Lord Cockburn in his 'Memoirs':

"Commonplace topers think drinking a pleasure, but with Hermand it was a virtue. It inspired the excitement by which he was elevated, and the discursive jollity which he loved to promote. But beyond these ordinary attractions he had a sincere respect for drinking, indeed a high moral approbation, and a serious compassion for the poor wretches who could not indulge in it; with due contempt for those who could, but did not . . . No carouse ever injured his health, for he was never ill, or impaired his taste for home and quiet, or muddled his head; he slept the sounder for it and rose the earlier and the cooler. The cordiality inspired by claret and punch was so congenial to all right thinking that he was confident he could convert the Pope if he could only get him to sup with him, and certainly his Holiness would have been hard to persuade if he could have withstood Hermand about the middle of his second tumbler."

* The seat of Lord Dalhousie.

Lord Hermand, as well as his friend Lord Eldon, lived to a very advanced age, and neither seem to have suffered even a headache from their drinking-bouts. Lord Hermand used to deplore the degeneracy of his youthful friends, who would not or could not follow his example, and once pathetically complained "What shall we come to at last! I believe I shall be left alone in the world—drinking claret!"

Lord Hermand used frequently after sitting up all night to walk into Court, merely washing his hands. Even when on the seat of justice he pleaded the cause of drinking.

Lord Cockburn writes:

"Two young gentlemen, great friends, went together to the theatre in Glasgow, supped at the lodgings of one of them, and passed a whole summer night over their punch. In the morning a kindly wrangle broke out about their separating or not separating, when by some rashness, if not accident, one of them was stabbed, not violently, but in so vital a part that he died on the spot. The survivor was tried at Edinburgh, and was convicted of culpable homicide. Very properly he was only sentenced to a short imprisonment. Hermand, who felt that discredit had been brought on the cause of drinking, had no sympathy with the tenderness of his temperance brethren, and was vehement for transportation! 'We are told,' said Lord Hermand, 'that there was no malice, and that the prisoner must have been in liquor! In liquor! Why he was drunk! and yet he murdered the very man who had been drinking with him! They had been carousing the whole night, and yet he stabbed him! after drinking a whole bottle of rum with him! Good God! my Lords, if he will do this when he is drunk, what will he not do when he is sober?'"

I have introduced the character of Lord Hermand in this article to show that there are fanatics for drink as well as total abstinence. They are both equally mistaken. Scotland was not entirely given up to hard drinking. The character of the celebrated Presbyterian preacher, Sir Henry Moncrieff, is my idea of a perfect, temperate, Christian gentleman.

This is what Lord Cockburn writes of him:—

"Tradition says that the suppers of Lord Monboddo were the most Attic in his day. But the Sunday suppers of Sir Henry Moncrieff are worthy of record. This most admirable and somewhat old-fashioned gentleman was one of those who always dined between sermons, probably without touching wine. He then walked back—look at him—from his small house in the east end of Queen Street to his church, with his bands, his little cocked hat, his tall cane, and his cardinal air; preached, if it was his turn, a sensible, practical sermon; walked home in the same style; took tea about five; spent some hours in his study; at nine had family worship, at which he was delighted to see the friends of any of his sons; after which the whole party sat down to the roasted hens, the goblets of wine, and his powerful talk. Here was a mode of alluring young men into the paths

of pious pleasantness. These days are now passed, but the figure and the voice, the thoughts, and the kind and cheerful manliness of Sir Henry as disclosed at those Sunday evenings, will be remembered with gratitude by some of the best intellects in Scotland."

I have just read in the paper the speech of a Mr. Robert Sawyer (I wonder whether he is any relation of our old friend, Bob Sawyer, who was described by his friend Ben Allen, "as the quietest creature breathing"), who stated as a fact, "that alcohol was an instrument of Satan to destroy and prevent persons from getting to heaven." I am sorry to differ from such a very high authority, but I am not aware of anything in Scripture which warrants such an assertion. I cannot conclude this article better than in giving the summing-up of Lord Campbell on the temperance question.

"The teetotal system now gaining ground is certainly infinitely preferable to the habitual soaking of port wine or whiskey punch; but I cannot help thinking that an occasional *booze* has a favourable tendency to excite the faculties, to warm the affections, to improve the manners, and to form the character of youth. Of course it is understood that excess is to be avoided, which is not only contrary to morality, but inconsistent with true enjoyment."

Christmas is approaching, when many friends will meet to talk over old times and enjoy the rare, quaint taste of old wine. Let the "occasional booze" be conducted without excess. Moderation is best in all things, moderation in eating, moderation in drinking, and I must add, without any intention of hurting the feelings of Mr. Robert Sawyer and the Reverend Ebenezer Shout, moderation in talk.

Belinda.

By RHODA BROUGHTON.

Author of 'Red as a Rose is She,' 'Good-bye, Sweetheart,' 'Second Thoughts,' etc.

PERIOD IV.

Chapter XXXIX.

"This wrong world."

It is evening. Professor Forth's chilliness has for once vanquished his parsimony; and in the grate of his attic room, a small, carefully-nursed, never-poked fire burns sparingly cheerful. But he cowers over it, and stretches his hand to its frugal blaze alone. One would have thought that such a walk as that undertaken by Mrs. Forth would have been enough to satisfy the energies of any reasonable woman; and yet she is again out of doors. She is not walking, indeed; she is standing upon the rustic bridge that leads to wood and waterfall; standing there in the soft dusk—not alone!

They have passed the windows of the garishly-lit public drawing-room, where lamps and jets of gas are making a gaudy glare; a heterogeneous assemblage of people, forced into unnatural sociability, irksomely driving through an evening in common. Some are working; some are playing whist; some are yawning; one is feebly singing; and all are in the fullest blaze of the gas and the paraffin. How much better to be outside in the moist sweet dark! His arms are about her, she no longer resisting; and her tired head is resting on his shoulder.

Henceforth she will always have that shoulder on which to lay down her head. What matter, wading through what waters she has reached its refuge? A throb of mad, reckless joy thrills through all her uneasy body. Since she is to pay the price—and such a price!—let her at least have some joy to show for it! Oh, if it were but all right!—all on the straight!—what could heaven do better than this? Ay! but the might of that "if!"

"And you *must* go?" she says sighingly; you think it is quite unavoidable; you *must?*"

"I must!" he answers, in a tone as grudging as hers; "there is no help for it; there are"—hesitating—"there are arrangements to be made—that I must make personally—that could not be done by writing; and I must also go to Milnthorpe, to see about my work."

She has raised her head.

"It—this—will not make any difference to your work?" she asks rapidly, and in a tone of acute alarm; "it—it will not injure your prospects?"

"Of course not; of course not!" he answers, in a tone of feverish reassurance; "why should it? what connection is there between a man's private life and his business relations? What concern is it of theirs whether or not I—I——"

"You run away with your neighbour's wife," she says, in a low, hard voice, finishing his sentence. "Why do not you speak out?" if a thing is not too bad to do, it is not too bad to say!"

But through the dark he divines the agony of the blush that accompanies her words; and again that sword-like pain, which had marred the first moments of his triumphant bliss, once more traverses his heart. There is not a breath of air. What has become of yesterday's hustling north wind? By the starlight they can dimly see that the clouds no longer fold the mountain-heads. They have dropped to their waists, and airily girdle them.

She is resting her feverish hands on the wooden railing, wet with the recent showers, and looking down on the half-seen shining rocks, and the water flashing white in the semi-darkness. How pleasant is its continuous rush and low roar; and yet there is something oppressive in it; something that makes one out of breath!

"You will not be long away?" she says, with a passionate wistfulness; "you will not leave me long alone? you will come back as soon as you can?"

"Need you tell me that?"

There is almost derision in his tone. He has drawn her back to her former resting-place and is most soothingly and half timidly caressing her hair. Not yet can he realise that it is the glorious proud head which has always seemed farther above him than the stars, that is lying in prone abandonment on his shoulder.

"You will not despise me more than you can help?" she whispers, with a sob; dark as it is, hiding her face on his breast. "Of course you *must* despise me; but you will try and hide it as well as you can, will not you?"

Are his wits wandering? Can this be his divine and lofty lady, preferring this miserable prayer? Can this be he, blasphemously listening to it?

"How *am* I to get through these days?" she moans, clinging to him: "oh, come quickly back! come quick! quick! How am I to look him in the face without telling him what I am planning against him? if he says one kind word to me, it will be the death of me! Happily for me, he never does!"

For all answer, he only strains her more desperately to his heart. What words can he find with which to console her? Surely that silent embrace, strongly enveloping her with its love and its pity, is best.

"I shall be always fancying that you are growing tired of me," she says, still whispering, and her speech broken by dry sobs; "promise not to grow tired of me! promise! Remember that I shall have nothing—*nothing* but you in the whole wide world, and that when you are gone from me, *everything* will be gone. But what is the use of making you promise?" with a despairing change of key; "how can you help it? If you grow tired of me, you will grow tired; and there will be an end of it!"

She has pulled herself out of his arms; and now stands apart from him, as if in prophetic renunciation. He puts up his hand to his head as if his brain were turning.

"When you say such things," he cries incoherently, "you make me feel as if my senses were gone! *I* grow tired of *you! I! I!* Oh, my love, my lady, my Queen!" falling down at her feet and kissing the hem of her gown, as if no humility of posture could adequately express the abasement of his soul before her; "if you knew how I am eating my heart out with the thought that *you* may grow tired of *me!* that you may find out I am not worthy of the sacrifice you are making for me!—that *I*, only *I!*—oh my poor love! my poor love!—may not be enough for you!"

He stops, choked, pressing his head against her trembling knees; and his scalding tears filter through her gown. The intensity of his emotion calms her a little. At all events, he is not tired of her *yet!* She stoops, and lays her hand almost protectingly upon his head.

"Yes!" she says; "you will be enough!" But in the dusk her face looks livid, and she ends her sentence with a sob.

The next morning he goes—goes, leaving her to live through as best she may the days that must intervene before his return. How—by what process as yet unconjectured by her—is she to live through them? They will pass, of course. No day has yet dawned upon sad humanity that did not pass; even Damiens' death-day passed. But how? The weather, at all events, will not come to her help. It has changed from capricious showers

back to such headstrong, hopeless rain as accompanied their drive from Lowood. There will be no seeking escape in mountain walks; no tiring down thought by tired muscles.

"How *am* I to live through them?" she says, as she stands alone, at the window of her husband's room, staring vacantly through the smeared pane, which baffles sight, and waiting for him to be ready to begin work.

He has entered the room without her perceiving it. Has she spoken her last words aloud? She hardly knows.

"What are you looking at?" he asks.

She gives a great start.

"I—I—am looking at the rain!"

"I hope that you will content yourself with looking at it," retorts he drily. "I must exact a promise from you that you will not, by exposing yourself to it, incur the danger of that relapse with which you were obviously threatened yesterday."

"I promise," she answers docilely.

Since she is going to be guilty of this one enormous treason against him, she may at least pay him the mint, and anise, and cummin of any tiny obedience that comes in her way.

"But I shall have no temptation," she adds feverishly. "I want to work to-day: I am up to a great deal of work. You need not be afraid of overworking me to-day!"

(It is an uncalled-for caution! He has never been at all afraid of overworking her.) And yet, indeed, it is from him, and not from her, that the first suggestion of an interval from labour comes. The afternoon is four hours old, and the faint smell of the brandy-and-water that temperately irrigated the Professor's luncheon is beginning to die out of the close room, when:

"Your writing has become unsteady," he says, looking critically over her shoulder; "I presume that your hand is growing tired. Perhaps we had better desist until to-morrow."

"No! no!" she cries vehemently; "why should we? I am not at all tired! it was only carelessness. I will take more pains."

"You are unable any longer to concentrate your attention," he says, pursuing his examination; "you have omitted two most important words."

"Have I?" she answers remorsefully; "but indeed I am not tired! I had much rather go on; there—there is no time like the present!"

"To-morrow," he begins; but she interrupts him.

"*To-morrow!*" she repeats feverishly; "who knows what may happen to-morrow? We may both be dead to-morrow!"

The Professor dislikes the mention of death.

"Pshaw!" he says crossly; "what is the use of indulging in puerile suppositions?"

But she has her will. Until the hour of dinner she toils on. She has not, indeed, attained her end—that state of numb woolliness to which yesterday a less portion of labour had brought her. To-day, overwork has had the contrary effect of sharpening to its highest capability every power of thought, memory, and imagination.

She goes down to the *table d'hôte* alone. The Professor, labouring under some real or fancied accession to his ailments, has (having, however, previously taken care to notify in good time his intention) restricted himself to the delights of a basin of gruel over his own fire. Belinda is placed at dinner beside a couple who had been fellow-inmates with her of the Lowood Hotel, and who, like her, had come on hither. She had been on terms of friendly civility with them, and they now express pleasure at having again met her, and try to draw her into conversation. But she repulses all their efforts with a surly brevity. They shall not have to say afterwards that she let them talk to her.

And now the day—*one* day—is ended, and it is night. Oh, these nights! Dreadful are they—dream-haunted, nightmare-ridden! and yet neither dream nor nightmare are comparable for horror to their waking moments. And through them all, the waterfall pours, pours, in its maddening monotony. Sometimes she feels as if she *must* tell some one; *must* rush out to some of the sleeping strangers and tell them! Perhaps it would not sound so bad if it were told! After all, such things happen every day. Her loss will be no loss to her husband; an economy rather!

She laughs bitterly. He will be glad to be rid of her. Has not everybody with whom she has lived hitherto been glad to be rid of her? Could her grandmother contain her joy at having shaken her off? Professor Forth, too, will be glad to be rid of her. By-and-by, *he* will be glad to be rid of her! Oh, the despair of that thought! She will see him growing tired of her! Loyal gentleman as he is, he will try his best to hide it; but he will not hide it from her! She will be jealous of the very air for touching his face; every day she will ask herself, "Is he *quite* the same? Is he *quite* as glad to see me as he used to be? Does he call me his darling quite as often as he did?" She will see his love slowly sliding—sliding away from her. What will she have to bind him to her? Not honour, for she will have cast off honour; not real love, for real love goes only with respect, and she will have said good-bye to respect; she will have shaken

hands with shame. The cold sweat of agony stands on her brow. Whether or not there be a hell elsewhere, she has found hers here.

The last day has come; the last of the three that are to intervene between his going and the morning when she is to meet him at Keswick railway station, bidding, for his sake, farewell to husband, friends, and good repute.

Two nights such as the one I have described; two days which, though inferior in agony, seem yet to have been crammed as full of mental suffering as they can hold, have brought her to the verge of a nervous fever. At the lightest noise it seems as if she must scream out loud. She is, as usual, at her toil in her husband's room. She has changed her position, so that she may not see him as she writes; so bitter is the remorse with which the sight of his withered face and shrunk figure fills her. Poor old man! What has he done to her, that she should deal him this murderous blow?—for a murderous blow it is to his honour, if not to his heart. By what right is she stabbing him in the dark? Because he is old, sickly, and peevish? Was not he all three—did not she know him to be all three—when she married him? How little he suspects her! Exacting and undemonstrative he may be, but how perfect is his confidence in her!

"You look feverish," he says.

There is, or she fancies it, a tone of kindness, almost compassion, in his voice; and in a moment she has fallen on her knees. It is not too late, even yet! She will tell him all.

"What the deuce are you about?" cries he acrimoniously. It is very seldom that he employs even so small an oath as the one recorded; and his present indulgence in it is a measure of his irritation. "You have let fall a great blot of ink upon Gregory Nazianzen!"

For a moment she still kneels there, stunned; then, slowly recovering her senses, and healed completely of her impulse towards confession:

"I beg your pardon," she says, stammering; "I—I had dropped something. I—I—was going to look for it!"

The hours pass by. They seem at once to crawl and to rush. With no one but her husband does Belinda exchange a word. She has sufficiently snubbed into silence, and rejected with eager rudeness, the efforts of the civil visitors; who, attracted by her beauty, and compassionating her apparent loneliness (the Professor has adhered to his *régime* of solitude and gruel), have tried to include her in their talk. She has harshly rebuffed a little child, who, encouraged by former notice, has run up to make friends with her. None of them shall be able to say afterwards that she

forced her company upon them—that company which they will then look upon as pollution.

The dinner hour is near, and she is standing outside the hotel door, drawing long gasping breaths. Is it a little easier to live out of doors than in? It has been another wet day; the sun has been neither seen nor heard of; but now, so near the hour of his daily dying, he asserts himself. From beneath a lead-heavy pile of rain-clouds he is thrusting his head; but his radiance is tempered to a weird, moony splendour. About the hills' necks are thrown cobwebby kerchiefs of vapour; and to all these he lends a nameless pale opulence. In the sky he builds up an aerial city, augustly fair as that one seen in trance at Patmos; and on the waters his sovran feet have trodden a straight path of quivering diamond. Across this royal path a little boat has the presumption to take its course; and at once is harmonised into a solemn unity with the transfigured water and the mountain pinnacles—pinnacles as of the great City of God.

Belinda looks at it all with a wild, dry eye, and a choked throat. Oh, beautiful, cruel, terrible world! Would not it be easier to endure if it were ugly and unsightly? if there were not this horrible contrast between its fair shows and its hideous realities? The sight is of such strange loveliness that at every window of the hotel heads are thrust out to admire it. A little group of people have followed Mrs. Forth's example, and issued out into the road. The lady with whom she had been on friendly terms at Lowood is standing near, and addresses her.

"Why will you never speak to us now?" she asks, in a wondering voice. "I am afraid," laughing a little, "that you must think that there is something wrong about us; that we have run away, perhaps, and are not married! Mamma met some people like that at Spa last year; it was so awkward, for she had made quite friends with them!"

She stops abruptly, for the woman she addresses has turned ghastly, unaccountably pale. The evening is one of extraordinary stillness. On the satiny water the heavens lie exactly copied, cloud for cloud, clear sky-field for clear sky-field. That strange pallid effulgence—lessened indeed, fainting away by slow degrees into obscurity—is yet still there; an effulgence not of the gold and carmines and purples that one usually associates with sunset; but of a paler, whiter, lunar quality.

Again those sobs rise in her throat. Oh, lovely, ironical world! when will you cease jeering us in our misery? And now it is night. She has gone to bid her husband good-night. Often, on previous occasions, she has omitted this ceremony as nugatory;

but now a morbid impulse to be at all events lacking in no little dues of courtesy towards him, possesses her.

She finds him sitting stooped over his hearth, with his empty gruel-basin beside him, and his fleshless hands absorbing the last warmth of the expiring fire.

"I have come to say good-night."

"Have you? Good-night."

Now that the ceremony is concluded, it is clear that he expects her to retire; but still she lingers, and again that longing to fall on her knees and tell him all sweeps over her. Poor old man! How old and feeble and lonely he looks!

"You are not ill?" she says unsteadily.

"According to you, I am never ill," replies he drily; "I enjoy the most robust health; if I were to tell you that I were ill, you would discredit the assertion!"

"Oh, but I should not," she cries remorsefully; "I quite believe that you often, often suffer. Is there—is there—nothing I can do for you?"

"You can shut the door," replies he, with a snarl; "a thing that, since the beginning of my acquaintance with you, I have never known you do! and since it is already past my usual hour of retiring to bed, I will ask you to shut it upon the *outside!*"

Chapter XL.

"Look up! There is a small bright cloud
Alone amid the skies;
So high, so pure, and so apart,
A woman's honour lies."

And now the night has to be faced. With what dread has she watched the slow declension of the summer evening; but no dread comes up to the reality, to the miserable endless hours of hand-to-hand fighting with the terrible battalions of thought and remorses, that come up, ever fresh and fresh, against her; that, while all around her are softly sleeping, take her by the throat in the blackness, and will not let her go. To no dream or nightmare, indeed, does she give the opportunity to torment her, for she makes no attempt to sleep. Fully dressed, widely, burningly, awake, she sits all night writing, writing, writing endless letters of farewell to him, who, parted from her only by a flimsy lath-and-plaster partition, lies tossing in the light and uneasy dozes of old age. How many does she write? They must be a score, at least; prayers for forgiveness, cries of

remorse; and no sooner are they written than she tears them all. Prayers for forgiveness of a wrong that is unforgivable! Cries of remorse for a sin that her action shows she has not really repented of! Why insult him by such? The dawn has come by the time that she has at length written the three lines which, without reading over—if she read them over, she knows that she would tear them too—she feverishly folds and places in an envelope. In them there is neither petition nor repentance.

"I am going to leave you for always. You cannot think that I have been a worse wife to you than I think myself.

"BELINDA."

To have toiled all night for such an outcome! She walks to the window, feeling stiff and chilled. The morning is bringing all night's secret to light. Again the wooded hill rises a hand-breadth off; the little patch of sky that it allows her to see is putting on day's blue livery.

Well, then, it has come! There is no going back now! no more shilly-shallying! There is nothing for it but to make the best of it! She has turned from the window, and accidentally faced herself in the glass. What a spectacle! What heavy smouches under the eyes! What baked white lips! But in her face is there something else too! something new and unqualifiable? Is it already beginning to assume that pitiful, brazen look, that women such as she wear? Well, if it is, what wonder? If it is there is no help for it!

The time is so short—so short now! Surely for that short time she can manage to keep thought at bay? She moves noiselessly about, busying herself with this and that. She takes off her wedding-ring, and making it and the few paltry trinkets that her husband has ever given her into a small packet, directs and places them beside the letter; then she tries to ruffle her bed and give it a lately occupied air: no easy task, for a bed that has not been slept in *will not* look like one that has. Then she undresses; and by-and-by, when her hot water is brought, makes her toilet afresh, having first placed letter and parcel in a conspicuous situation upon the chest of drawers which serves as dressing-table, and goes downstairs.

How near the time is now! She refers, for the hundredth time, to the paper of directions left with her by Rivers. At such an hour she is to set off. It is within five minutes of that hour. She has ordered over-night a carriage to convey her. It is true that an omnibus plies between hotel and station, but from its

publicity she shrinks with unconquerable aversion. It will be full of people. They will be talking and laughing. They will talk to her; perhaps—quite as likely as not—they will ask her where she is going!

So she has ordered an open fly for herself. It shall be no expense to Professor Forth. She can easily return him by post the money for it. Yes; but *whose* money? A scorching blush burns cheek and brow, and she covers her miserable face with her hands.

It is three minutes past the appointed hour, and the carriage is not yet here. Perhaps there has been some mistake! Perhaps it was never ordered! But no sooner has this sickly hope—that is scarcely a hope either—flared up in her mind, than it is extinguished again. For an open fly comes rolling briskly up to the door. Perhaps it may not be hers. Other people order flys too. Perhaps it may be for some one else. But this delusion also dies.

"The carriage is ready, ma'am," says a waiter, approaching her.

"Are you sure that it is mine?" she asks huskily. "Are you sure that it is not meant for some one else—that there is no mistake?"

"No mistake at all, ma'am!"

There is nothing for it but to get in. As she takes her seat—

"Will you dine at the *table d'hôte* to-day, ma'am?" asks the waiter innocently.

In an instant all the truant blood has poured back into her snow-white face. Does he suspect her? Has he asked her on purpose?

"No!" she answers almost inaudibly—"no, not to-day."

And now she is off! The die is cast! Nothing has happened to prevent her. To the last moment she has dimly believed that something would happen to prevent her. But no! nothing has! No fire has fallen from heaven to consume her! No accident has occurred to hinder her! By what small accidents—happening at the last moment—have other people been saved! No accident comes to save *her!* Neither God nor man cares what becomes of *her!*

The morning is lovely, with morning's fresh look of newness, as if the ancient hills had but just been turned out of their Maker's workshop. Lapis-blue is the lake, as a summer lake should be; and with its little islands laughing in summer forest-green upon its radiant lap. Over one mountain shoulder, indeed, a few slight cloud-shadows, thrown light as gauzy scarves, still lie. But on his brother's granite knees there is strong resolute sunshine, and in their ravines shadows cut hard and black.

Oh, cruel world! Again you are jeering her with your beauty! Her eyes roll wildly round, and thought after thought courses with mad rapidity through her head. Little irrelevant incidents out of far-away childhood, fragments of forgotten books, texts of Scripture. "I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help!" That is what teases her most. And yet what applicability is there in it to her? Does any help come from the hills to her? Beneath the trees that lip the lake, and through whose leafage come ever glimpses of its dazzling gaiety, the sweet road winds. Along it some of the inmates of the hotel are leisurely walking, and, as she passes, look up to nod and smile at her.

Would they nod and smile at her did they know whither and on what errand she is bent? What right has she to leave them under such a delusion? She must undeceive them. So distraught is her brain that she leans out of the carriage to accomplish this lunatic purpose, but they are already left behind. How fast the driver drives!

Why does he drive so fast? She calls out to him to go slower; and then, with a new and contradictory longing that it should be over, should be irrevocable, bids him drive faster again. And still, numberless as sand-grains, quicker than lightning, the thoughts rush through her head. It is a sentence out of 'Sartor Resartus' now that is beating and hammering in her brain; a 'Sartor Resartus' casually left behind by some stray guest at the hotel, and as casually opened by her yesterday. "Love not Pleasure; Love God: This is the Everlasting Yea!" Why should it buzz in *her* ears? What has it to say to *her?* How short the drive is! The roofs of Keswick are already in sight. That was a short drive, too—the drive to church on her marriage morning. With what dreadful vividness does it now return in each detail of its pinched and icy misery upon her memory; she sitting there in dead despairing obstinacy, and Sarah sobbing beside her, telling her that it was not too late! Sarah was right. It was not too late then. If Sarah were here now, would she still tell her that it is not too late? Oh, why is not she here then? At every step of the road her agony heightens, and a cold sweat stands on her forehead. It is not too late! *It is not too late!* This is written in letters of fire all over the mountains; all over the lapis lake and sapphire sky. *It is not too late!* How plainly she can read the words! They are taking the character of a command! *It is not too late!* Dare she disobey such a mandate?

"Stop!" she cries, standing up suddenly, like one possessed. But her emotion is so overpowering, and her throat so dry, that

no sound issues from it. The horse still trots rapidly on. "*Stop!*" she repeats, but once again her disobedient organs play her false, and the horse trots on. "STOP!" she cries frantically, a third time; and now, at last, the coachman hears, and pulls up. "Go back!" she says hoarsely, and almost unintelligibly; "go back to the hotel!" then, becoming aware, though sight is dim and head giddy, of the unbounded astonishment depicted on his face —"I—I—have forgotten something!"

"We shall lose the train, ma'am," he answers, civilly demurring; "we have not too much time as it is."

"Go back!" she repeats huskily; and then, indeed, wondering, he obeys.

She sinks back, and covers her face with her hands. What has she done? She forbids herself to ask or think. But has she done it in vain? If, during her absence, her letter has been discovered, she will have returned in vain. Even if it has not been already discovered, every minute that passes lessens its chance of escape. At this very moment it may be being found, and she will have turned back in vain.

"How slow you drive!" she cries harshly; "drive quicker, quicker!"

How could she ever have thought the distance short? It is immeasurably, unbelievably long! The hotel is in sight! A few people are standing about the door. Have they heard! Are they talking about it? The fly has stopped. Is she in time? It seems as if there were an ominous silence about the idlers hanging round. Have they heard? She dare not look the waiter, who comes to help her out, in the face. She staggers past him into the hall; then, by a tremendous effort, steadying herself, she rushes upstairs. Is she in time? Flight after flight she mounts, with that question surging in her ears. She has reached her room—has burst into it. Is she in time? One glance gives her the answer. Yes, she is! Undisturbed, exactly as she had left them upon the top of the chest of drawers, lie letter and packet. She *is* in time! Oh, the relief of that thought! And yet, so complicatedly contradictory are we, that, at the sight so madly desired, a distinct pang of disappointment crosses her heart. Had the letter been discovered, there would have been the one and only refuge left her, and no one could *then* have blamed her for availing herself of it. She starts, shuddering at herself. Is she already repenting of her repentance? What security has she that she may not again go back from it? Within her there is none; if there *is* a security for her, it must be one outside her. She has taken the letter into her hand, and stands for a few mo-

ments motionless; a desperate determination gaining strength in her heart, and painting itself on her haggard yet resolute face. Since the letter has not yet been delivered to him, she herself will deliver it. She will tell him under what circumstances it was written. *This* shall be her expiation.

Without giving herself time for hesitation, she moves quickly out of the room, and knocks at her husband's door. There is no answer, and she knocks again. Still no reply. Perhaps, though it is not likely, he may be out. So she enters. No, he is in his usual seat, by his improvised writing-table. He could not have heard. His attitude is not quite his usual one, for he is apparently unoccupied, leaning back in his chair, and with his head bent a little forwards on his chest. He must be thinking, and will probably chide her for disturbing him. Well, it cannot be helped. Heaven knows he has cause enough to chide her!

"Can I speak to you?"

Her voice sounds strangely resonant in the silent room. There is no answer, nor does her husband show, by any movement or slightest change of position, that he is aware of her vicinity. It is very odd. She has spoken loudly and distinctly, and he is not deaf. He must be asleep; and yet, he is not apt to fall asleep in the morning! A chill terror is creeping over her, but she tries to shake it off. Her nerves are unstrung. Why should not he be asleep? How apt old people are to slide into a doze.

Conquering the nameless, senseless dread of approaching him that has come over her, she walks firmly up to him, and laying her hand on his arm, stoops and looks into his face. The next instant a sharp shriek rings through the hotel, and when frightened visitors and chamber-maids, hurrying from all quarters, reach the room, they find Mrs. Forth lying stretched on the floor beside her husband, as inanimate as he. Only that in time they bring *her* round again. As for him, he has for ever vindicated his character from the imputation of being a *malade imaginaire*, and the Professorship of Etruscan in the University of Oxbridge is vacant!

(*Conclusion.*)

The Eton Days of Sir Stafford Northcote.

It has happened more than once that the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition have both been Etonians:* no theory can therefore be established as to the influence of Eton in moulding political opinions. Ten Prime Ministers have been educated at the school, and of these, six have belonged to the Whig or Liberal party, and four to the Tories. Lesser Ministers have been contributed by Eton to either party in about equal numbers, and it might be said of them all that the old school trained them well for public life without giving their minds any bias. Some Etonians have appeared to regret this, complaining that the conditions of Eton were over-Conservative. "Traditions," however, is a word which is too often allowed to pass current without scrutiny. A school of Liberal traditions, assuming such a place to be the exact opposite of what Eton was, and is, would not necessarily produce Liberals. It would not do so even if men habitually held to the opinions inculcated on them as boys, which is by no means the case. Boys strongly imbued with certain ideas called Liberal to-day might find themselves mere *doctrinaires* twenty years later, and be accounted unpractical reasoners. Liberalism is not an adherence to theories which schoolmasters can reach; but a habit of mind engendered by knowledge of the world and respect for the opinions and even the prejudices of others. You cannot make a boy Liberal by instilling maxims about freedom and forbearance into his mind, but you can put him in the way of learning early for himself that patience, tolerance, and fair play are good agents of progress. In so far as it did this by allowing boys more liberty than is enjoyed at any other place of education in the world, Eton might be described as the most Liberal of schools; and the Conservatives who have been trained there are much steadier friends of liberty than many men, who, calling themselves Radicals, in our time, are advocates of coercion and restriction in all forms rather than of emancipation.

A French writer, reviewing an article which appeared in this magazine on Mr. Gladstone's Schooldays,† remarked how well fitted

* The Prime Ministers who were educated at Eton were: Sir Robert Walpole, the Earl of Chatham, Lord North, Lord Grenville, C. J. Fox, George Canning, Earl Grey, Viscount Melbourne, the Earl of Derby, and Mr. Gladstone.

† "Mr. Gladstone's Schooldays": 'Temple Bar,' February, 1883.

was Eton life to rear strong men, and he pointed out how different to Eton would be any Continental school under aristocratical patronage. "Hearing that the masters of Eton were mostly clergymen," he said, "and that the pupils belonged with few exceptions to the upper classes, we should have been disposed to imagine, from experience of what occurs in our own clerical schools, that Etonians would be brought up in rigid Conservatism. We could well fancy the ecclesiastical teachers trying to harden the minds of their scholars against all new ideas, allowing only orthodox books to come under their eyes, forbidding them to read newspapers, and jealously watching to see that the boys, who, by their talents or high rank, were likely to become powerful in the State, should not be contaminated by association with other boys of irreverent or mocking character. We can only marvel and admire when we learn that under the terrible Dr. Keate it was a worse crime in a boy to write bad Latin verses than to hold Liberal opinions. We could no more conceive of a French Eton than the English could imagine or endure such a college as that in the Rue des Postes.*

It seems a matter of course to us that our public schoolboys should be trusted with liberties which astonish foreigners; but perhaps we hardly realise why we have come to think this natural. There was a beginning to the present system, and the masters who first understood how much they might safely teach and how much they might leave their pupils to learn unaided, were valuable educational reformers, although they may not have been aware of the fact. In the article on Mr. Gladstone's Schooldays, it was shown that the Eton of Dr. Keate's time lay open to censure on many points, because the masters were unable from one cause and another to do even the little which they undertook to perform. They set their faces against educational crotchets, saying that it was quite enough for a boy to learn Latin and Greek; but they did not teach Latin and Greek. Gladstone learnt no divinity or mathematics. His tutor, though a good scholar, was not fitted by character to give him either example or precepts of conduct: all the benefits therefore which he derived from Eton came to him from the liberties of the place. Keate, if a martinet, did not attempt to exercise spiritual tyranny over his boys, as is the custom of head masters of the clerical schools on the Continent, and as the head masters of certain new English schools have done with no good results. A Tory himself, Keate did not endeavour to propagate Conservatism, and though a clergyman he thought it no part of his duty to preach attachment to the Church of England, or even religious earnestness. Had he done otherwise Eton could never have maintained its rank as the most popular of

* The Jesuits' College, where many boys of Royalist families are trained.

schools. A Conservative Arnold at Eton would have made Whigs reluctant to send their sons to the school; he might have converted the place into a Tory seminary but it would not then have been the Eton we know, and it may be doubted whether the pupils trained there would have succeeded in public life as those have done who grew up under a system which left them free more or less to choose their own associates, pursuits, and opinions.*

Mr. Gladstone who owed so much to the liberties of Eton—though little we must confess to its direct teaching—seems to have forgotten the debt when speaking to the boys of Marlborough School in 1877, he said, "The ancient foundation of Eton is unable to compete with you in the ordinary standard of attainments." There is no period at which this could be truly said of Eton. In every decade, in every year, it has produced boys who were destined to rush to the front of every profession. Nor was Mr. Gladstone more happy in his judgment of his old school when he added:

> "There is a difficulty and a temptation in those great connections which draw the sons of the great to take shelter and seek education in her walls; and Eton has subtler temptations than these; and that is the constant influx of the wealthy, and the tendency of wealth and large money indulgences among boys, just as well as among men, to corrupt and lower the tone of the school."

Mr. Gladstone was in Opposition when he said this, and all ancient institutions had temporarily lost favour in his sight. He contradicted some of his own words, however, by adding in the same speech: "No boy is estimated the more or the less because he has much or little money to spend." This is true, but how could it be said then that the presence of rich boys at Eton corrupted and lowered the tone of the school? As to the other complaint that there was a danger to ordinary boys at Eton from their connection with the sons of the great, this was surely one of the most unreflective outbursts ever inspired by a fault-finding mood. What might not Mr. Gladstone have said about Eton, had none but the sons of the great and the rich "found refuge in her walls"? How easy it would have been then to denounce the school as a nursery of obscurantism, caste-pride and purse-pride! It has been of inestimable advantage to the sons of the great and wealthy that they have mixed at Eton with ordinary boys, and have had to hold their own against them in all school contests on equal terms. It has been an advantage to the duke's son to be the fag of the parson's boy, but these advantages have been reciprocal, and the harmonies of political life in this

* A master once reported to Dr. Keate that he was anxious about a pupil who was addicting himself to excessive religiousness. "I'll flog him," said Keate. "It's all conceit. That boy, if he is a bigot now, will sicken of religion and become an infidel when he leaves school."

country have certainly been promoted to a very large extent by the fact that the sons of professional men, of merchants, of clergymen, have made friends at Eton with the sons of peers and great landowners, and have learnt to know and to like them. In short, one has only to take any period in the history of Eton, and the roll of eminent men to be collected from the names of boys in the school list will testify amply to the good influences of the school. Since the public were interested in hearing about Mr. Gladstone's school-days and his schoolfellows, we may in this paper take a glance at the Eton of a later period when Mr. Gladstone's chief political opponent, Sir Stafford Northcote, was there.

Stafford Northcote's time was from Easter 1831 to Easter 1836. Born in 1818, Northcote was thirteen years old when he entered the school as an Oppidan, and he was placed in the Remove*—the highest place to which an Oppidan new boy could pretend. His tutor was the Rev. Edward Coleridge, and he boarded in that gentleman's house. Mr. Coleridge died only a few months ago at an advanced age, a Fellow of Eton and Rector of Mapledurham. He was one of the ablest, kindest, most popular, and one may add most conscientious among the Eton masters whom living generations have known, and Northcote in having such a man for his tutor was more fortunate than Gladstone had been in Mr. Knapp. It will be remembered that Gladstone had left Eton in July, 1827, so that less than four years had elapsed since his departure and Northcote's arrival. The school had not much changed in that time. The courtly and gentle, but routine-loving Dr. Goodall, was still Provost; Dr. Keate was still Head Master; Mr. Knapp had become Lower Master; and the staff of assistant masters, ten in all, was as inadequate as ever to cope with the requirements of 670 boys.† Nevertheless three new assistants had been appointed since 1827, although the number of boys had not much increased in the meanwhile, and several of these assistants were quietly doing their best to improve the tone of the school, and to give proper help to the boys who were really desirous of working. In saying that the tone of the school wanted improvement, one must not be understood to imply that it was worse than that of other large schools of the period. The tone of society itself was bad throughout the reign of George IV., nor was it being much ameliorated under the auspices of William IV.,

* Sir Stafford Northcote is the son of the late Henry S. Northcote, Esq., of the Pynes, Exeter (who was the eldest son of the seventh baronet, and died in 1850). He succeeded his grandfather in 1851. The first baronet in the family was Sir John Northcote, sheriff of Devon in 1626, and long time M.P. for that county. He has left a curious "Note Book" of proceedings in the Long Parliament, which was reprinted in 1877.

† There are now forty assistant masters at Eton for 980 boys.

and Eton was but a miniature of the world outside. Hard-drinking, gambling, low and cruel sports, and prize-fighting, were recreations patronised by the aristocracy of the day, and Dr. Keate had made it his practice to wink at much which he felt himself unable to cure. Two or three of the new assistant-masters, however, were much less tolerant. Among the older masters Mr. E. C. Hawtrey, who succeeded Keate in the headmastership, and was afterwards Provost, had set the example of caring for the manners and morals of his pupils, and Mr. James Chapman, Mr. John Wilder,* and Mr. Coleridge followed in his wake.

Mr. Coleridge was not at all the sort of man to take pet pupils up to the theatre in London, and get into brawls with watchmen in their company, as Mr. Knapp used to do. He was a handsome, curly-headed man of the sunniest disposition, whose high animal spirits had often got him into scrapes during his own days as a schoolboy and as an undergraduate at Oxford; but he was essentially a high-minded man. Low dissipation disgusted him, and he would not shut his eyes to its evil effects. To say that he would get a boy punished for merely smelling of drink may seem like giving him that negative praise which is awarded to a strict naval officer in the 'Bab Ballads:'

> "E'en he who smote his officer
> For punishment was booked,
> And mutinies upon the seas
> He rarely overlooked."

But many Etonians who have not yet reached middle age can remember the time when there was a wide difference of opinion among masters as to whether notice ought to be taken of offences which were not flagrant. For instance, if a boy were caught in the very act of drinking or smoking, or if he were manifestly intoxicated at any time when he was obliged to appear before a master, that boy would be punished; but most tutors held that it was inexpedient, if not unfair, to try and spy out a boy's misdeeds, or to convict him on circumstantial evidence. There were tutors during Mr. Coleridge's time and long afterwards, who, having reason to suspect that a boy had gone to bed the worse for drink, would avoid entering his room, and who moreover took care never to detect their pupils in card-playing. It cannot be said that these gentlemen were indifferent as to the growth of bad habits, but they had a horror of inquisitorial systems as un-English, and calculated to destroy the confidence which should exist between a boy and his tutor. Their favourite method of checking any abuse which they suspected was by sending for the captain of the house and appealing to him privately to arrest

* Mr. Chapman afterwards became Bishop of Colombo, and Mr. John Wilder is now Senior Fellow of Eton.

the evil. Mr. Coleridge himself, before he left the school in 1857, had become somewhat a partisan of this system, which unquestionably worked very well sometimes by making boys in authority feel their responsibilities, but when he first became a house-master, the doctrine of *laisser faire* did not seem to him a good one.* He tried to establish himself as the playmate and friendly mentor of his elder pupils, and as the friendly guardian of his younger ones. He was fond of going the round of the boys' rooms of an evening to talk with them about their concerns, to encourage them in their work or in the pursuit of lawful amusements, and to offer private remonstrances if he saw them going wrong. In all this he did much good because he was personally a great charmer. His genial face, hearty laugh, and straightforward character gave him advantages which a master less happily endowed by nature, though having intentions quite as good, would not have possessed. It is not every man who can win the confidence of boys, even by striving most honestly to do so.

Mr. Coleridge also quickly won a great reputation as tutor, by engaging an assistant at his own expense to act as a "coach" in his house. Such a thing had never been done before, and the innovation was not much relished by the other masters. The assistant in question was Mr. T. W. Allies, the first winner of the Newcastle Scholarship, founded in 1829;† and we believe the first to benefit by his instruction was W. A. Cotton, who won the Newcastle Scholarship in 1832, and was a relative of Henry Cotton, now Lord Justice, also a pupil of Mr. Coleridge, who became Newcastle Scholar in 1838. It may be added here that the present Lord Chief Justice was also a pupil of his relation and namesake Mr. Coleridge; and that among the other boys in the house were the Marquis of Granby, now Duke of Rutland, his brother, Lord John Manners, and Thomas Farrer (Sir T.), whose sister Sir S. Northcote afterwards married. J. D. Coleridge, J. Manners and T. Farrer were all Lower boys at the same time as Northcote, but below him in the school. Hobhouse (Sir Arthur), who married another of the Misses Farrer, and who was Northcote's principal friend at Eton, was for a long time in the same division as his future brother-in-law, rose with him to the Sixth Form, accompanied him to Balliol, and like him eventually won a first-class in classics.‡

* The Rev. E. Coleridge was appointed assistant master in 1825, lower master 1850, Fellow 1857. He married Dr. Keate's daughter, and after Dr. Keate's retirement took his house at the lower end of what is now called Keate's Lane. Mr. A. C. Ainger now has this house.

† He became Fellow of Wadham, Oxford, took orders and afterwards joined the Church of Rome.

‡ Sir S. Northcote was in the first class at Michaelmas term 1839. In the same list figured Benjamin Jowett, now Master of Balliol. Arthur Hobhouse got his first-class in 1840. He now holds the appointment of Steward of the Courts, and legal adviser to Eton College.

Northcote did not long remain a Lower boy. He passed into the Fifth Form at Christmas, 1831, so that his experiences of fagging were very brief, comprising in fact but one full school-half. His contemporaries describe him as having been a clever boy, gentle, studious, very neat in appearance, and never in scrapes:

> "The blossom of all manly virtues made
> His boyhood beautiful."

He was not a "sap"—that is, an ostentatious grinder at books: he did all things quietly and methodically, being one of those admirably constituted young fellows who do not intrude their occupations upon others, but find time in plenty for play as well as work. Shortness of sight prevented him from taking to cricket as the quieter boys used to do in those days, when wet-bobbing was the pastime of the faster set. In the summer half of 1832, Northcote began to scull pretty regularly on the river, and was soon noticed for the neatness of his oarsmanship. As he was small and of light build, an offer was made him to steer one of the long boats, which he declined; but it was predicted of him very early that he would become one of the best oars in the school, and this came to pass. In 1834, he entered the Boats and was placed at once in the "Third Upper," now called "Prince of Wales," but then "Adelaide" after the Queen Consort; in 1835 he rowed in the school eight, and going to Oxford, he pulled in the Balliol boat.

For a boy to get into "stick-ups," before he was fourteen, was formerly considered a great achievement. The word "stick-ups" came from the fact that there used to be three varieties of Etonian costume instead of two as now. At present boys dress according to their statures, either in jackets with black ties knotted sailor fashion, or in cutaway coats with white ties; but fifty years ago a boy discarded the black tie on getting into the Fifth Form, and if he was too small for "tails," he wore a jacket with a stand up-collar and a white tie, not by-the-bye the slim piece of cambric of these latter days, but a substantial roll of cravat, which went twice round the neck, and terminated in a bow about a foot long. Such was the costume of Northcote when he entered the Fifth Form in 1832, and found himself nearly the smallest member of that honourable company.

That year, 1832, was notable in the school annals for an attempt which was made to revive the 'Eton Miscellany' which Gladstone had edited five years before. The new venture was called the 'Eton College Magazine,' but it was started on the same lines as the 'Miscellany,' and was equally good. The three conductors, all in Doctor's Division, were highly accomplished boys, who were to become distinguished men. The editor was John Wickens, who afterwards took a double-first at Oxford, went to the Bar, and became a Vice-

Chancellor. His two assistants were Thomas Phinn, a colleger; and the Hon. G. W. Lyttelton (the late Lord Lyttelton). Phinn took a first-class in classics at Oxford in 1835; became a barrister, a Q.C., Secretary to the Admiralty, and was for some time M.P. for Bath. Lyttelton was bracketed Senior Classic at Cambridge in 1838 with Vaughan, now Dean of Llandaff and Master of the Temple.

It was natural that boys of such sound scholarship as these should write good English; but Eton has had fine scholars in recent times, and yet none of the school periodicals of the last quarter of a century are to be compared with those of fifty years ago. And the most recent of Eton publications—those that have appeared since the school-work has been much increased and varied—have been the worst of all. Explain this as we will,* John Wickens and his contributors wrote with a force and elegance which we hardly expect to find in the compositions of boys. There was nothing laboured in their pleasantries; they avoided slang, and their canons of taste were correct without pedantry. The "Autobiography of an Etonian," contributed as a serial by Lyttelton, was a very entertaining production, and gives as good an account of a boy's life at Eton as any that has been published. We can collect evidences in it of many changes that have come over the manners of Etonians, though, as John Moultrie wrote, Eton seems to change so little:

> "The spirit of past days unchanged is there,
> While all things else are changed and changing everywhere."

Thus we gather from the "Autobiography" that the boys were accustomed to yell while being flogged, but they pretended it was "only for fun," not from the pain. The floggings were public.† Sometimes only two or three spectators (all Etonians, of course,) attended an execution; but if some eminent culprit—say a fellow in the eleven or the eight—was going to be flogged, a crowd of over one hundred boys would throng the staircase leading to the Head Master's room, and indulge in noises like a mob at a Newgate execution. The howling of the victim was intended to make this large audience laugh, and little Dr. Keate look ridiculous. A boy who in his hallooings could imitate the braying of a donkey, the squeaking of a pig, or the yelping of a puppy, would almost be applauded like a comic actor; and sometimes it would happen that the irascible little Doctor would turn round to catch by the cuff some

* It was explained in "Mr. Gladstone's Schooldays" by the reason that the best scholars in the school have now no time for journalistic pursuits, so that the Eton periodicals of these latter times have generally been conducted by boys of third-rate ability, not diligent in school-work, and untrained to write by sound knowledge of the classics.

† This continued to be the case in the Upper School until Dr. Goodford's time, in the Lower till the end of Mr. Durnford's rule in 1878.

wight who was enjoying the fun too loudly, and would order him to follow the victim on the block. This custom of shrieking under the rod ceased when Dr. Hawtrey became Head Master in 1834; but its continuance throughout Keate's rule serves almost to justify the remark of an old Etonian * that Eton was not to be regarded "as a school for serious business, but rather as a *crèche* where big children were sent by their parents to be kept out of harm's way, and to amuse themselves." It is pretty obvious that Keate's boys did not take him *au sérieux*. He was not much more venerable or terrible in their eyes than a village dominie.

In some things, however, the Eton of those days was not amusing. The fagging by Lyttelton's account seems to have been often hard; the treatment of small boys in all games, but especially at football and hockey, wantonly rough. Hockey has long been given up at Eton, but it flourished in the days of the 'Magazine,' and that journal mentions D. W. P. Labalmondière † as having been the best player in the school. As the fashion of wearing "change" clothes in games was not yet tolerated by the authorities, Lower boys used to play at football with their tall beaver hats on, and the condition of these headdresses after a hot game was curious. Little lords, the sons of millionaires, are described as going about in hats "all brown with mud, and battered like the felts of the Irish peasantry."

The 'Magazine' published verses, but none so good as those given to the 'Miscellany.' The following little jest which the editor described as "unpolished" may be taken as a specimen of what was best in comic rhyming:

"Says Dick, 'I'm sure we can't die.'
'I wish you could prove it,' says Ned.
'Why, we don't die so long as we live,
And I'm sure we can't do it when dead!'"

Etonians who were at the school in 1832 would be interested in looking over the volume of the 'Magazine' which is in the library at the British Museum, for some unknown annotator has been at pains to pencil in the margin the names of all the boys who are alluded to in the periodical either by pseudonyms or blanks. Thanks to him, we get acquainted with all the young politicians introduced in a lively report which Lyttelton gave of a debate which took place in the Eton Society in 1832. The proceedings of "Pop" seem to have been conducted in those days after a desultory fashion, for we are told that the members having assembled, knew not on what subject they should debate. They sat about eating ices and drinking cherry brandy till at length it was resolved to dispute about Charles I. A

* Mr. John Delaware Lewis.
† One of the Commissioners of Police.

little time before this Dr. Keate, hearing that the Literati—as they called themselves—had taken to discussing the politics of the day, sent for their president, Wilkinson,* and offered some objections to their doing this. It was then arranged that the Society should only debate on political events which had occurred at least fifty years before; but practically this rule in no wise limited the liberty of the speakers, since they could touch on the men and things of the day by indirect allusions. Dr. Keate had the sense to see this, and never more meddled with the Society except to give it encouragement. The lead in the debate on Charles I. seems to have been taken by George Mellish (afterwards Lord Justice), who is set down as "an ultra-Tory of inordinate assurance." John Wickens is mentioned as the only Radical in the house; and he must have been an amiable editor, for he allows it to be said in his own magazine that his delivery was bad. W. A. Carter† is rated for his readiness to interrupt the debates by crying "No," very loud, and for invariably declining to stand up and speak when called upon to do so; while Robert Keate‡ is depicted standing up "red as fire, and so excited that he had to sit down and collect himself, after which he rose and made a very poor speech." It is to be noted that Lyttelton sets down almost all the members as poor speakers and nervous. Out of fourteen whose sayings he reports he admits only Mellish as a first-rate speaker, and on the whole he rather sneers at "Pop" as an institution of not much utility. He is not alone in his opinion, for by mismanagement the Society fell away, so that in 1835-36 a committee sat to revise its rules. Northcote was one of its members, and some of the best suggestions for the regulation of the debates, and the silencing of members who made irrelevant remarks, emanated from him.§

* Charles Allix Wilkinson. He was a colleger and Captain of the Eleven in 1832. He afterwards became Chaplain to the late King of Hanover.

† Lower Master from 1857 to 1864, and now a Fellow.

‡ Nephew of the Head Master, afterwards Governor of Trinidad.

§ The President was to have power to move that a speaker who was wasting time should not be heard, but nothing in the shape of *clôture* was to be allowed: and it is indeed remarkable how wisely jealous this Society of Schoolboys was from the very first as to its liberties. It showed this in the very year of its foundation (1811), and at the expense of its founder, Charles Fox Townshend. Having got the Society, which then consisted of twenty-one members, to vote that there should be an addition of nine to their number, Townshend proposed nine of his friends, who were rejected—one black ball to three white ones being enough to exclude. Furious at this, Townshend, who had a numerical majority of supporters, tried to prevail upon them to vote three resolutions—the first censuring the black-ballers, the second admitting the nine rejected candidates by a simple poll, and the third altering the statutes of the Society. To their great credit, Townshend's supporters refused to back him in this attempt on the

There is not much to say about Stafford Northcote's work whilst he was in the Fifth Form, and this for the reason that in those days when a boy had passed into the Fifth Form he was troubled with no more examinations so long as he remained at the school. The Sixth Form was reached in good time by seniority, and generally speaking it required three or four years to attain Doctor's Division. In the meanwhile no amount of talent or industry could earn a boy either honour or advancement. What was worse, the school curriculum provided a studious lad with no opportunities of progressing in his studies, for it was verily what its name implied: a going over the same course again and again. The books read in the Fifth Form were Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Æneid, Horace, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Scriptores Romani, a book of short extracts from Latin authors, and Poetae Graeci, a delectus of similar excerpts from Homer's Odyssey, Callimachus and Theocritus. These books had to be read through in a year, and at the end of the year they were begun afresh. Between 1832 and 1836, Northcote must have read them through three times. This, with the doing of a Latin theme, and a copy of verses once a week, was the classical education to be got at Eton in Keate's days. The Fifth Form boy knew nothing of Plautus, Terence, Lucretius, Persius, Juvenal, Livy, Tacitus, Cicero or Demosthenes. He knew nothing of Aristophanes, Pindar, Herodotus or Thucydides. As already said, he knew nothing of mathematics, although boys going up to Cambridge were required to pass in mathematics before they could try for classical honours. He knew nothing of divinity, although this branch of study was indispensable at all Oxford examinations. The time which a Fifth Form boy spent in school on days that were not holidays or half holidays varied between an hour and a half and two hours and a quarter. The longest class-time never exceeded forty minutes. But then there were three regular half-holidays a week, besides which every saint's day was a whole holiday, and the eve thereof a half-holiday; so that if it befell that there were two saints' days in the same week it might chance that there would be but one "whole schoolday" in that week.

Of course in the case of ambitious boys these evils tended in a measure to correct themselves. Being taught so little by their masters, these boys laboured privately to instruct themselves, and this is what Northcote did with much assistance and encouragement from his tutor. No tutor was backward in helping pupils who wished

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rights of the minority. They voted that his resolutions constituted a breach of privilege, and that he must be called to account for them; in fact, they held a sort of court-martial over him. Townshend apologised, and was acquitted; but he had been within an ace of getting turned out of the Society which he had founded.

to move onwards, but all of them were not competent to assist very clever boys. It was the rule to appoint as assistant-masters none but ex-collegers who had been at King's; and if a first-rate Kingsman were not available, an inferior man had to be chosen. Thus there were some very good masters, and some very poor ones. What has been said about Mr. Coleridge will have served to show that Northcote was lucky in getting just the right kind of man to direct him.

As to moral discipline, a boy who was well-trained at home was likely to associate at Eton with others similarly blessed. The school always had its good sets. There were some splendid young fellows among Gladstone's contemporaries, but they did not surpass those of Northcote's time. If we take the school list of election, 1835, in which Northcote's name figures among the Sixth Form boys, we find that sixth form made up almost entirely of boys conspicuous for ability, highmindedness and steadiness of character. Had it been recruited by a system of selection carefully designed to promote boys who should be an example to all others in the school, it could not have shown a finer set. Yet it must be borne in mind that these boys were simply products of an unsatisfactory seniority system.

There were twenty of them, and eleven of the number became clergymen. Two of these, the Rev. F. E. Durnford and the Rev. J. E. Yonge, were to be for many years Eton masters. Rowland Williams came to be vice-president of St. David's, Lampeter, and is the well-known writer in the 'Essays and Reviews.' The captain of the Oppidans was John Walter, of Bearwood, and among the other boys in the division were George Smythe, afterwards Viscount Strangford, author of 'Historic Fancies,' &c.; Reginald and Arthur Hobhouse; John Thomas Sutton, afterwards Lord Manners; and George Barlow, who has been for many years the much respected Rector of Stanmer-at-Falmer, near Lewes. Among the boys, who, not actually in the Sixth Form, were in the Head Master's Division with Northcote, were Edward Balston, now Archdeacon of Derby; John Hawtrey, for many years one of the most popular and successful of masters at Eton; Herbert, afterwards the Earl of Powis, who became Lord Steward of Cambridge University; and Henry Mildred Birch, now Canon. In fact, taking the next thirty boys after the twenty in the Sixth, we see that no less than eighteen of them went into the Church, while of the remainder two died at an early age, two became distinguished officers, one a judge, two hard-working barristers, and the rest settled down on their estates as country gentlemen. Of the whole fifty there is not one who can be said to have failed in life, or to have fallen short of that general standard of attainments which entitles a man to be called a credit to his school.

It has further to be pointed out that these boys of steady character—these future statesmen, clergymen, soldiers and lawyers whom the hazards of seniority brought to be Northcote's companions in Doctor's Division—were boys of muscle as well as of mind. Eight of the Sixth Form boys in 1835 were in the cricket eleven, and two of them, Northcote and Alfred Shadwell, in the eight; moreover these cricketers and oarsmen took with but one exception high honours at the University. Since reforms have been introduced into the school so that the Sixth Form is now reached through an avenue of examinations, such a brilliant "all round" Sixth Form as that of 1835 could not be selected from any Midsummer list. We do not deduce any theory from this fact, but mention it in order to demonstrate that old systems did not always work so badly as might be inferred from a superficial glance at them. This doubtless explains why many of them were of so long life.*

It has been stated that Northcote was put into the "Adelaide" or "Third Upper," when he entered the "Boats," in 1834. This was no small honour, for a boy almost always began by pulling in one of the Lower boats. The non-Etonian reader may be reminded that the Lower boats were not reserved for Lower boys. The "Boats" was the term applied to a Rowing Club formed by the crews of one 10-oar and seven 8-oars, all of whom were required to be Upper boys. A "wet-bob" had to be pretty expert with his oar before he could get into the "Boats" at all, but it was very seldom that a boy was consigned at once to either of the three Upper boats.† In 1835 Northcote was Captain of the "Adelaide" and "bow" of the eight. There was no race against Westminster that year, and Northcote only pulled in one important school race (Upper Sixes), which he lost.‡ One of his old companions in the eight writes of him:

"Northcote pulled in the perfection of Eton style, with grace and neatness. He sat up well, always got a good grip of the water, with a strong clean cut, and feathered neither too high nor too low. The best of

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* It is a curious coincidence that all the captains of the cricket eleven in Northcote's time were Sixth Form boys who took University honours and became clergymen. They were C. A. Wilkinson 1832, G. Vance 1833, John C. Ryle 1834, F. E. Long 1835, Robert W. Essington 1836. In Essington's eleven there were, as in Long's, eight Sixth Form boys, which shows that 1835 was not an exceptional year. Walter and Balston were among the players of Essington's eleven.

† The Captain of the "Adelaide" in 1834 was T. Broughton Charlton, of Chilwell, Notts, afterwards D.C.L. He married Miss Walter, sister of Mr. Walter of Bearwood.

‡ The Captain of the Boats in 1835 was Edmund C. Stanley, afterwards of Jesus College, Cambridge, and the coxswain of the Eight was Charles Hammersley, subsequently one of the partners in Cox & Co., the Army agents.

him was his sweet temper. He worked as much as the heaviest man in the boat, but never grumbled or looked tired, or took anything amiss. I remember once we were run into by a large 'tub' full of cockneys near Lower Hope. I am afraid we all used some rather ornate language, except Northcote, who, without a word, set himself to stop up a hole in the 'bows' by stuffing part of his coat into it. When we got back to Rafts it turned out that Northcote was the only one of the crew who had got hurt, for the bow of the cockney boat had bumped his shoulder rather badly. He was just as philosophical in the debates at 'Pop,' taking chaff and contradiction very coolly, but waiting for you round a corner, as it were, and confronting you with some unanswerable argument when you had ceased to expect it. His placidity made you often think that he had no strong opinions, but the truth is he never cared to join in the first fray of a debate, when everybody was anxious to speak and when 'words raged hotter than reasons.' He used to listen to what others said, and was clever at reviving a debate which flagged. He was not reckoned one of our best speakers, for he only stood up when he had something to say and sat down when he had said it, adding nothing by way of rhetorical ornament. He was never President of the Society. Balston held that office in 1835, with A. H. Shadwell as chairman. Arthur Hobhouse was President in 1836, with Goulburn as Chairman. Northcote, however, became President of the Oxford Union, like Gladstone and like a number of other eminent Etonians after him—Lord Dufferin, Sir G. Bowen, Mr. Ward Hunt, Lord Salisbury, &c."

To end these notes on Sir Stafford Northcote's school life it may be added that he took part as one of the "salt bearers" in the Montem of 1835—the first which the Queen, then Princess Victoria, witnessed. King William IV. and Queen Adelaide were also present, and the captain of the school, whose name was Money, got a purse of £960. The King contributed £50, the Queen £20, and the Princess Victoria £50.* Montem was always held on Whit Tuesday; at election in that same "half" the King, the Queen, and Princess Victoria again visited Eton and heard the Sixth Form deliver speeches in the Upper School, after which the Head Master, Dr. Hawtrey, was requested to grant the boys an extra week's holiday. Dr. Hawtrey had succeeded Keate in 1834; but his accession brought no immediate changes to the school, for Dr. Goodall was still Provost. It was not until 1840, when Dr. Hodgeson succeeded to the Provostship, that Dr. Hawtrey was enabled to introduce sundry innovations which had become necessary.†

* G. Williams, the Captain of Montem in 1832, cleared £893, and R. L. Brown in 1829 £885. But these amounts were much diminished before they reached the pockets of the boys for whom they were collected. The Montem Captain was expected to give a dinner to about 100 boys at the Windmill, Salthill, amd bear many other expenses connected with the pageant.

† We have not mentioned, among the other contemporaries of Sir S. Northcote at Eton, J. F. Mackarness, now Bishop of Oxford, Mr. Charles Newdegate, and the late Duke of Marlborough.

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Long Ago.

I sit beside the sinking fire,
  Watch the weird faces in its glow;
All through the night *I* should not tire,—
  But they have faded, long ago.

Ah—dust to dust!—the last repose,—
  Ashes to ashes!—well I know
How surely this hath been with those,
  Those whom I loved, so long ago.

How surely this with me will be!
  From every petty joy and woe,
From fancied slight, from jealousy
  Made free and safe,—ah! long ago.

And yet may some things with us stay;—
  As, on the waters, lilies blow
In white and green,—just as they lay
  In white and green, so long ago.

'Tis pleasant now to think,—'Perhaps
  In Memory's light one's face may glow;'
"Out upon Time!"—for all things lapse
  In that sad, dreary, long ago.

But when I'm dead, don't *thou* forget,—
  Thou whom I used to treasure so;
Yet may one tear thine eyelid wet,
  Because I loved thee,—long ago!

Gage Earle Freeman, M.A.

The Horse: a Study from Outside.

It has always appeared to me that the horseman, like that early friend of our Latin exercise-book days, the poet, is "born, not made." It has also occurred to me from time to time that I was not born a horseman. Place me in any other situation, combining comparative security with an extensive landscape, in the corner seat of a railway-carriage for instance, steaming through a fine open grass country, with stiff yet practicable fences, and there is no feat of equestrianism with which I do not feel myself capable of "witching the world," in imagination. But place me astride the tamest and most docile of quadrupeds, and there is no more helpless object for sympathy, no inmate of Earlswood or Broadmoor less responsible for his actions and those of his horse, than myself, in reality. My hands at once tangle themselves inextricably in what always strikes me as an absurdly superabundant allowance of bridle. My knees, which I have understood ought to grip the saddle firmly, as firmly decline to do anything of the sort; and worse than all, I am convinced that my horse instinctively recognises the fact that I am both morally afraid of him and physically incapable of interfering with whatever eccentricities he may be pleased to indulge in, and participates actively in the general compassion, not unmixed with contempt, which my helpless appearance excites.

There is something about the eye of that so-called noble animal, when first he catches sight of me, neatly but not gaudily equipped for equestrian exercise, (I hate not to be quite *comme il faut* in attire for whatever I undertake,) which expresses clearly to my own mind, if not also to my neighbours', that he *has found me out.* He regards me with a glance of mingled pity and sense of superiority, ominous of discomfiture and ignominy to myself, when he shall have got me into a situation favourable to the display of his diabolical ingenuity. It is vain for me to try to look knowing—worse than useless to pretend to adjust some strap or buckle already perfectly ship-shape, to run my hand critically down his foreleg, (trusting meanwhile that he won't regard it as an unwarrantable liberty, to be sternly avenged when his time comes,) or to attempt meanly to conciliate him with the gift of a biscuit or an apple. The consciousness of being a detected impostor still haunts me, and I know moreover that he regards my peace-

offering as a bribe, and despises himself in the act of acceptation for not rejecting it with the scorn it deserves.

Then comes the first critical moment. With an inward prayer that the groom will keep fast hold of his head until I am seated (I almost wrote *securely* seated) in the saddle, with my right foot in the stirrup, I convulsively grasp the reins and proceed to mount. Now, to my mind, it is impossible to conceive any position of greater jeopardy than that of a man in the act of mounting a horse, with the single exception of that of a man who has mounted him. Clutching the saddle with one hand, the bridle and crest of the beast with the other, you proceed to make a series of ineffectual dabs with your left toe at a stirrup dangling in mid-air well above your reach. At last, with a supreme effort of acrobatic contortion, you succeed in thrusting your foot into the stirrup, and at once, unless firmly detained by a second party, your horse begins to move off, leaving you the alternative, either of withdrawing the foot and commencing operations *de novo*, or else of retaining your hold of saddle and stirrup, and hopping on your disengaged foot, with what grace and dignity you may, in pursuit of your steed whithersoever his inclinations may lead him. Neither alternative is satisfactory, or dignified; but personally I prefer the former.

But even supposing the quadruped to stand still, the risks to be encountered are not yet at an end. Impelled by the springing power of the right toe, the body must now be projected at once upwards, forwards, and with a rotatory motion, while the right foot must be thrown dexterously over the animal's haunches. Now it is quite evident to any reasoning mind that this process must be attended with some difficulty and not a little actual peril. The smallest amount of superfluous energy in the projection, or the slightest error in the elevation of the right foot, will inevitably result in a semi-somersault and an ignominious descent, head foremost, on the far side of the horse; while on the other hand a minute deficiency in the propulsive effort results in a feeble wavering attempt to maintain the balance, followed by a resumption of the hopping posture, no less amusing to the spectator than annoying to the performer.

We will, however, suppose the happy medium to be struck, that I have reached the saddle, succeeded in finding the right stirrup, and that the horse's head is set at liberty. I am now seated astride a highly-polished surface of pig-skin, slippery as glass, and consequently impossible to be gripped. My feet, the sole means of supporting myself in a vertical position, rest on two narrow, smooth bars of steel which are quite ready to slip from under them at any moment, except in the contingency, by no means remote, of my being forcibly ejected from the saddle. My left hand is hopelessly involved in an endless

collection of straps, none of which I dare drop, lest my steed should at once "take the bit in his teeth" and make off, none of which I dare tighten, since I am not sure what he might do if he "felt the curb." Under these circumstances it at once becomes apparent that there is a difference of opinion between me and my steed as to the road to be travelled. Duty calls me to the right. The quiet but unmistakeable resolution of the horse is to turn to the left. Now or never I must assert my authority. With my disengaged hand I timidly pull the right-hand rein. The horse shakes his head petulantly, and I desist. No more serious demonstration following, I again apply steady tension on the rein. The horse recognises my position of authority so far as to turn round slowly, and as if under protest, and then stands stock-still. I make encouraging sounds. He maintains a strictly passive demeanour, and refuses to budge. Slowly and with extreme caution I approach my spurs to his sides. In another instant they will touch him, and I harden my heart and prepare for the worst. Suddenly, with a prescience of coming evil, he throws up his head, gives a derisive snort, and rears. I abandon my intention respecting the spurs, clutch him firmly by the neck, and waive the point in dispute. He then resumes his normal posture and we proceed by the road to the left, which, though it involves a circuit of some miles to reach my destination, has the undeniable recommendation of being the only one which my steed will consent to pursue.

The first round has resulted entirely to the advantage of the enemy. Nothing can be urged against my strategy or my tactics, except that I was perhaps a trifle too conciliatory; and as we proceed in a very leisurely fashion along the road, I revolve in my mind the persuasive arguments which a more determined equestrian might have used, and finally decide that I was in the right to yield. "The merciful man is merciful to his beast;" and if not an actual, I have at least gained a moral victory.

While I am thus consoling myself, my horse is strolling quietly along the lane, which fortunately is intersected by no byeways, keeping a sharp look-out all the while for unfamiliar objects, and meditatively scrutinising all five-barred gates and fences, evidently measuring them with his eye, with ulterior designs. Meanwhile time is getting on—and with an appointment to keep, and this long additional circuit to make, more speed will be absolutely necessary. How will this necessity suit the opinions of the horse? Personally I am growing more at my ease, and though familiarity does not yet threaten to breed contempt, either for the determination or the discernment of my mount, it encourages me to hope that my next suggestions may find him more amenable to reason. I therefore

gather the reins more firmly together as a sign that I am prepared for a gentle trot. He disregards the signal, merely stretching his neck and drawing the bridle loose again. Plainly that method is useless, and I must resort to stronger measures. The spurs, after his former demonstration, are out of the question; will he show the same objection to the use of the whip? Come what may, the experiment must be made. Again tightening the reins, and making the best imitation I am capable of, of the familiar "cluck!" which is apparently the upper-class synonym for the vulgar "Gee!" I touch him lightly on the flank. No effect. I repeat the process, this time with more vigour, and emphasised with a spasmodic convulsion of my body, intended to suggest the motion of rising in the stirrups. Victory! the hint is taken, and the horse breaks into a long, loose, shambling trot, accompanied by a swaying motion of his head from side to side, suggestive of a toy animal fitted with clockwork. However, it is so far satisfactory that we have increased our rate of progression from two to about six miles an hour. The motion is slightly fatiguing, and I find it rather difficult to keep time with so protracted a step, but I feel that I must be willing both to give and take, and this semblance of a trot is no slight concession on the part of the horse. Besides, the style in which he is now progressing may surely be taken as evidence that he is suffering either from fatigue or from depression of spirits, and encourages me to hope that his preliminary performance was a mere momentary ebullition, unlikely to be repeated. Altogether I am much better satisfied both with him and with my own horsemanship than when we started, and am beginning to entertain hopes of a complete *entente cordiale*.

Alas! that the golden dreams, the air-built castles of imagination, should be so rudely shattered. The proverbial milk-maid's pail, the basket of glass upon which Alnaschar's fancied fortune depended, the basis of the late European concert, the dream of a most amiable enthusiasm, all these were sound and durable foundations by comparison with the premises upon which I was arguing. A sudden bend in the road, a lean, hungry-looking black sow, accompanied by a litter of piglings in search of a dinner in the roadside ditch, a grunt of surprise from the former, answered by a chorus of squeals from her progeny, and all that is fiendish in my steed's nature is aroused. He executes a wild bound sideways, to the opposite hedge, causing me to drop my whip, and very nearly dislodging me altogether, and then, before I can recover balance or reins, breaks into a gallop. Of all paces of which the quadruped is capable, that to which I have the strongest aversion is a gallop. I have seen men who under these trying circumstances can stand coolly upright in their stirrups, and look as if they enjoyed it. I have seen others, who can sit with every appearance of un-

concern, close in their saddles, unmoved and unshaken by the terrific convulsions of the beast they bestride. But I can do neither. At each bound I feel myself shot helplessly upward, only to return with a bump which knocks the breath out of me, and threatens to dislocate every bone in my body. My arms become numb and nerveless with tugging at the bridle. My eyes stream with tears produced by the rapid flight through the wind. My knees refuse their office, and I have the horrible consciousness that at every fresh concussion my spurs must inevitably bury themselves in the horse's sides, and act as a stimulus to fresh and more fearful efforts. Like Cowper's equally unlucky hero,

> "I grasp the mane with both my hands,
> And eke with all my might."

Astonishment, coupled with the sensation of absolute mastery, excites the savage beast to put forth all his powers. The hedges seem to fly past us in our wild career, and I am dimly conscious of vague wonder as to what will befall when we reach the cross road, and the lane we are traversing ends abruptly.

I am not long kept in suspense. A hundred yards—fifty—twenty—a feeling as if the horse was gathering himself like a hedgehog into a crumpled ball, a sudden wrench as of the drawing of several double teeth at once, a crashing sound, a sensation of soaring upwards to an infinite height, and a remarkably unpleasant concussion immediately afterwards, convey to my mind the knowledge that my steed has made very little of the post and rails which lay directly in front of us, and that I have alighted, not on the saddle, but on the neck of the animal, who seems inclined to resent the intrusion by kicking me off altogether. With a furious effort I thrust myself back into my seat, but alas! the right stirrup, leather and all, has disappeared, and Pegasus has no intention of stopping to look for it. He is enjoying the novel sensation of having turf under his feet after his gallop on the macadam, and has moderated his pace so as to allow of the variations of occasional kicks and buck-jumps. My fate is now sealed. With a pair of stirrups I should run no chance of keeping my seat under present circumstances. With one only it becomes a mere question of how soon, and where he will deposit me. All my strength has departed. I feel like a quivering mould of jelly, morally and physically; I am grimly conscious of having bidden a long farewell to my wife and family, and am quite aware that the thorn hedge ahead with a narrow deep ditch on the near side of it, is the predestined scene of my final catastrophe. The calm of absolute despair settles upon me. The horse has perceived the obstacle, and is quickening his pace for the fatal spring. Another

moment, and with one of those sudden freaks which form the most diabolical trait of the equine character, he has changed his tactics. Planting his forefeet in front of him on the very brink of the ditch, he stops dead! and I, turning an involuntary somersault, alight on my back in a squashy furrow of newly-ploughed clay, on the far side of the hedge. There for a minute or two I lie, perfectly breathless, and wondering whether the blue sky above me forms the canopy of a new world. Then, coming to myself, and mentally thanking my stars for the softness of my resting-place, I gather myself up, and gaze ruefully on a crushed and flattened object, which a few short moments ago was one of Lincoln and Bennett's masterpieces. At length I turn to the spot where my steed and I had finally dissolved partnership, and behold—nothing: the horse has utterly disappeared. I sweep the field with my eyes; but there is not a sign of him. Then I climb on to the low hedge bank, and the mystery is solved. There is the ragged broken edge where he had planted his feet, and there on his back, lying lengthwise in the ditch, into which his body fits closely, and with all four feet pointing helplessly to the sky, is the horse himself.

Here is a predicament. To imagine that he can extricate himself is absurd. To conceive that I can lift him bodily out of his present situation equally so. There is clearly nothing to be done but leave him where he is while I seek assistance to dig him out. Shall I confess that I feel at the moment a thrill of satisfaction at the helpless and undignified attitude of my tormentor? So far the laugh has been entirely on his side. Now it is my turn to exult over the fallen foe. Revenge is sweet, and for a brief minute or two the notion of leaving him to perish where he has fallen crosses my mind. But the awkward inquiries which his owner at the livery stable may institute, coupled with the probability that he will be discovered before dissolution, and restored to his master at my expense, overcome even the thirst for exemplary revenge, and I turn away to look for aid. The nearest habitation is at least a mile away, and after my recent acrobatic performances I do not feel greatly inclined for pedestrianism, particularly in the present condition of my costume, and with some pounds weight of rich loam adhering to my neat riding-boots. But "needs must" under certain circumstances, and at least I shall be able to recover my missing stirrup and whip *en route*.

Hardly have I started to retrace my steps, when a hail from a remote corner of the field reaches my ears, and I perceive with delight a hedge-trimming yokel peering over the fence. To answer his hail and signal my distress are the work of a moment, and leaving his occupation he is soon at my side. I haughtily affect not to notice the grin with which he acknowledges the *grotesquerie* of my

appearance and that of my horse. I explain, with an assumption of perfect unconcern, that I have met with a trifling accident. I was riding at the hedge, but my horse unluckily stepped on an unsound spot in the ditch bank and stumbled. Then flashes across my mind the suspicion, suggested by a twinkle in the yokel's eye, that he has witnessed the manner of my original arrival in the field over the post and rails, and the whole of my subsequent misadventures, and I lapse into silence, conceiving at the same time a deadly hatred for the yokel. He meanwhile applies himself to his spade, and has soon dug away the bank sufficiently to allow the horse to roll over on to his side, and so to resume the perpendicular, right side uppermost.

He presents rather a sorry spectacle: his mane, neck, saddle, and flanks are thickly coated with glutinous red mud. His bridle is broken off short at the bit; his ears are filled with clay; but withal his eye is undimmed. There is no shame, no symptom of apology to be seen there. He still regards me with that stern expression which plainly tells me I am found out, and seems already to be designing new methods for my humiliation. All this I have ample leisure to observe while the yokel washes the saddle in a neighbouring pool, and rubs some of the clay off the horse's back with a handful of grass. Then, while he repairs the bridle with a piece of twine, I make a pilgrimage in search of the lost stirrup. On my return all is in readiness for a fresh essay. The yokel, rewarded with half-a-crown, points out to me a short cut homewards by a bridle-path, which will at all events enable me to elude observation, and opens the field-gate as soon as I am once more in the saddle.

The horse is now a picture of placid docility, content to walk quietly along the beaten track, without showing a wish to diverge to the turf and resume his playful antics. A mile or more is safely covered, and we have met no one. I am full of hopes that my dilapidated appearance may yet escape criticism, and am busily planning to slip in by the back gate on reaching home, entrusting my steed to some passing urchin to be led to his stable. Suddenly my meditations are interrupted by an unforeseen obstacle, to wit a closed gate, a few feet from which the horse stops short, as if waiting for some invisible agency to give him passage. I am at a loss how to persuade him to approach near enough to allow me to raise the latch, and push the gate open. If I touch him with whip or spur he will certainly feel justified in clearing the obstacle; and I shall with equal certainty execute another parabolic curve in space. I try every gentle mode of persuasion, whistle to him, shake his bridle, cluck, even tempt him, *sotto voce*, with the plebeian "Gee whoa!" but without the smallest effect. At last he begins to show unmistakable signs of restiveness. In another moment he will assuredly jump. Any

risk, any inconvenience, is preferable to that, and as a last resource I dismount. The spot is delightfully muddy, irrigated by a stream which here runs across the path to lose itself in a slimy cattle-pond on the other side of the fence, and the horse has taken his stand so far from the gate that I am obliged to slip the bridle over his head, and hold it at arms' length, while I wade to the hasp. Then balancing myself on a slippery stepping-stone, I loose the fastening, and throw the gate open. But alas! the gate is long and opens towards instead of from me, and in my anxiety I have not judged distance accurately. The top bar catches my horse full in the chest, causing him to bound backwards, dragging me off my perch into the deep mud. Then he stops, and for a moment we stand looking at each other, I with an apologetic humility, he with a triumphant glare of malice and uncharitableness. He condescends to pass through the gate, and takes up his position in a slough of mud on the other side. I, still keeping firm hold of the bridle, close the gate after me, and again we face each other. Now comes the critical moment. Is he, or is he not, going to submit to be mounted? In any case he must come to me, for mounting out of the bog which surrounds him is impossible. I invite him to approach, but he sternly resists my blandishments. I tug the reins and utter persuasive sounds, to all of which he remains obdurately deaf. I raise my hand as if to offer him some toothsome dainty, and oh horror! he regards the action as a menace, and begins to back towards the pond. I shout "Woho!" in the most soothing accents I can command. He only backs the faster, and as the reins tighten, and he feels the bit, he throws up his head, and again jerks me into the slough. At every step I plunge deeper and deeper, but now all the wrath in my nature is aroused, my blood is up, and regardless of consequences I rush forward to seize his head and administer condign punishment. But I am reckoning without my host. The animal anticipates my design, wheels suddenly, wrenches the bridle from my grasp, and wasting a savage kick upon the empty air, departs. At the same instant I lose my footing, flounder wildly forward, almost recover my balance, lose it again, and plunge head foremost into the cattle-pond, amid a perfect avalanche of clods and mud from the hoofs of my vanishing steed.

Besmeared with duckweed and other slimy green abominations, I emerge at length, to find myself alone. On the miseries of my tramp homewards, with my boots full of water, and garments abhorrent with filth of all descriptions, it is too harrowing to my feelings to dwell. Suffice it to say that when I arrived, with aching limbs, and chattering teeth, and all the premonitory symptoms of catarrh and rheumatism, my dejected appearance and pitiful recital of the

malignities of that fiend in equine form, instead of evoking sympathy for my sufferings, merely moved my family to paroxysms of inconsiderate mirth. For months afterwards the most distant allusion, on the part of a casual acquaintance, to horses or horsemanship, was sufficient to call forth a narration of my misadventures, with such embellishments as the fancy of the narrator suggested, all which I felt it was equally useless to palliate or deny; and to this day, my younger children find a fund of innocent amusement in playing at "Papa tumbling off his horse." That unlucky ride has destroyed for ever, not only my own peace of mind, but worse than all, that beautiful confidence in the universal capabilities of the male parent, which natural instinct has implanted in the infant mind.

The day following the above adventures I was waited upon by a youth of villainous appearance, chiefly remarkable for the tightness of his nether garments and for the ineffable satisfaction which he seemed to derive from sucking a dirty piece of straw. He presented his master's compliments, and a bill, of which the following is a correct copy.

"Rose and Crown Livery Stables, Slowbury.

"Mr. —— Hastie,
"Dr. to Ephraim Snaffle,
"Livery Stable Keeper, &c., &c.

"*Posting done—Saddle Horses and Carriages for hire.*

"187–, April 1st.	£	*s.*	*d.*
Hire of saddle horse, 1 day	1	1	0
Paid boy for bringing him home		5	0
New bridle	2	2	0
Paid saddler for repairing saddle, and putting new tree	1	17	6
	£5	5	6"

My wife wished me to dispute the account, and persuaded me to consult my solicitor. But acting under his advice, I wrote a cheque for the amount in full, for which I hold Mr. Snaffle's receipt. Since that date I have not indulged in horse exercise.

Our Fastest Trains.

"There would be many less accidents on our lines if the speed on some of them were higher, or if there were *more* of the highest speed. A low standard of attainment breeds a slack discipline, but when a company tries every day to run as well as it possibly can, there must be, and is, a devotion to detail all along the line." —*Foxwell.*

"The mental energy and skill required to carry on work increases at something like the square of the speed with which that work is performed. The materials used must be far stronger and far finer; everything must be well proportioned and balanced; there must be the most perfect arrangement in each structure, and every part of a structure . . . and we may thus say . . . the higher the speed the better the work."—*Westmacott.*

"The mileage and speed of express trains in England are so much greater than in the rest of the world that any reflection on the fact must send a glow of satisfaction through every Englishman," says a recent authority on this subject.

A further trait of the English race is shown in the fact that in proportion as difficulties increase, they are more efficiently overcome.

Thus, the most punctual of our railways are those which approach the Metropolis from the north, and yet these not only traverse much greater distances than their southern compeers, but also have to overcome some of the principal mountain ranges of our island, and to encounter some of its worst weather. Their trains have also to await a far greater number of subsidiary trains, delay in any one of which would throw the whole arrangement into arrear—(and few outsiders are aware how many "connections" a single express makes every day, without taking into consideration trains which have to step aside out of its path at their appointed passing-places)—and all this upon lines heavily crowded with traffic.

Viewed in this light the condition of our southern lines is eminently unsatisfactory, and one is glad to observe the advances of some of the more important northern lines south of the Metropolis, if only as pioneering the way to further extensions on their part.

Though the first railways worked by locomotives came into operation in George IV.'s time, the creation of *the express* was reserved for the Victorian era.

What the speed of such trains would have been if the broad-gauge had become the national one we cannot stop to estimate, but we may

remark, *en passant*, as an instance of the momentum of speed stored up in a narrow-gauge train even, that a section of such a train detached for experimental purposes one day between Nottingham and Newark, at a speed of forty-five miles an hour, ran for five miles upon the level before coming to a dead stand.

There is, it need hardly be remarked, a great distinction between the daily speed of our fastest trains, and that of the fastest speed ever obtained. Any one wishing properly to appreciate this difference should study the experiments made by Brunel nearly half a century ago on the Great Western Railway. The speed of one hundred miles an hour was held possible by this eminent engineer under favourable circumstances, and on the broad-gauge, and if we mistake not, was (all but) attained between London and Bath. In 1846, on the South Devon Railway, then worked on the *atmospheric* principle, a speed of upwards of seventy miles an hour was obtained on an experimental trip from Exeter to Starcross, without the use of a locomotive.

These high rates of speed were sometimes turned to account on especial occasions, for we read in one of the papers of the time,* that when Her Majesty's Ministers were hurriedly summoned from London to Windsor to be present at the birth of the Duke of Edinburgh, trains ran from Paddington to Slough in seventeen and a half and eighteen minutes. The return journey was still quicker.

"On that day were also performed some wonders of railway travelling. The journey from Slough to the Paddington terminus was accomplished in less time than the distance had ever previously been traversed by a special passenger train on the Great Western line. The eighteen miles and a quarter only occupied fifteen minutes and ten seconds."

It would be difficult exactly to arrive at what rate of speed this was, having regard to the time required for gaining and reducing speed at each end of the journey, especially with the scanty brake-power available in those days.

Again, when peace or war were in the balance, a special engine was kept for a whole week at Holyhead waiting to bring up the United States despatches on the *Trent* seizure. On their arrival at Holyhead they were immediately forwarded to Euston by a special train over the London and North Western Railway, which covered the 264 miles intervening in five hours without any delay or stoppage on the road, other than a few minutes in pausing to change engines at Stafford.

Such examples might be quoted *ad infinitum* without including

* The 'Illustrated London News' of August 10, 1844.

the brief but dramatic account of an engine-driver nick-named "Hell-fire Jack," whose daring flight over the Dee Bridge at Chester, after one side had fallen into the river below, was the means of rescuing part of his train from the terrible fate which attended the latter portion of it.

It will be more practical, however, if we address ourselves here to such every-day instances of speed and convenience as are now placed within reach of all—or nearly all—would-be travellers. And for this purpose we shall frequently have occasion to refer to a very able and exhaustive paper upon the speed of express trains recently read before the Statistical Society by Professor Foxwell.*

Taking first of all the four lines south of the Thames, Mr. Foxwell remarks :

"Speaking generally, the four southern lines do not take kindly to expresses, but seem to run them under protest as compared with the spontaneous speed of the north of England. Then there is a worse feature peculiar to these four companies, that is, their enormous fares.

"On the south people pay from half as much again to nearly double what they pay north of it,† though the speed in the latter case is so much superior. In railway matters all items of excellence flourish or pine together. The comparatively sorry picture of fewer expresses, higher fares, more unpunctuality, and inferior carriages, to be observed south of the Thames, is a reflection on the people for whom the trains are run. The north of England towns would not submit to these services."

Of the four lines in question, the Brighton is the most rapid and convenient ‡ in its arrangements, but its fares are not only high, but its trains are too frequently restricted either to first class only, or to first and second class. Next to the Brighton line stands the Chatham and Dover, which, considering its frequent gradients and past financial difficulties, puts in a fair appearance.

It would be difficult to assign the palm of discomfort or inconvenience either to the South Western or South Eastern lines. The first mentioned has no trains of sufficient speed to be truly styled express between the Metropolis and such places as Portsmouth (popu-

* London : Stanford : 5*s*. See also 'Macmillan's Magazine,' No. 280.

† The first-class fares between London and Brighton (50¼ miles), with eight expresses daily, are given as 12*s*. 3*d*. ; between London and Bedford (49¾ miles), with seventeen expresses, 6*s*. 7*d*. ; between London and Dover (78 miles), with seven expresses, by either line, 20*s*. ; between London and Peterborough (76¼ miles), with twenty-nine expresses, 11*s*. 3*d*. ; between London and Salisbury (83¼ miles), with four expresses, 17*s*. 6*d*. ; between London and Rugby (82¾ miles), with fifty expresses, 12*s*. 9*d*. The return tickets on the southern lines are generally also available for much shorter periods.

‡ Excepting perhaps a misleading custom of painting on the sides of their engines the name of a place that they are not going to.

lation 127,000, irrespective of the travelling contingent furnished by the Isle of Wight) or Southampton, which is now becoming deserted by the ocean steamers. It has no mail train at night* west of Basingstoke, and its service to Bournemouth, Weymouth or Exeter is not subject to any undue hurry or monotonous punctuality. As far back as 1848 there were quicker means of railway communication between Southampton and the Metropolis than there are at the present day!

The legitimate grievances of the South Eastern travellers have been so recently and so amply placed upon record in the columns of the *Times* that it only remains to add that this line has probably the reputation of being the most unpunctual in England for local traffic, and its carriages are certainly the smallest and most uncomfortable.

The longest run without stoppage and the highest average speed on these lines are:

	Longest run without stoppage.	Time.	Highest average speed by any train.
L. B. & S. C. R.	Eastbourne and Croydon 55½ miles	in 1 h. 17 m.	46¾ to 48
L. C. & D. R. .	Dover to Victoria . . 78 miles	in 1 h. 45 m.	46¼
L. & S. W. R. .	Yeovil to Exeter . . 48¾ miles	in 1 h. 3 m.	46¼
S. E. R. . . .	Cannon Street and Dover 74½ miles	in 1 h. 39 m.	45

We now come north of the Thames, where we meet with a noticeable improvement in the Great Eastern—once the slowest of railways.

Liverpool Street has superseded Shoreditch, and on all sections of the line there are symptoms of awakened energy and improvement. The longest runs on the Great Eastern are Liverpool Street to Parkeston Quay, 69¼ miles, in 1 hour and 46 minutes, and Liverpool Street to Ipswich, 68¾ miles, in 1 hour and 40 minutes.

The greatest speed, 48¾ miles, is however attained between Lincoln and Spalding on the new Northern Extension.

The three great northern lines with their continuations are next to be considered, and the first place by common consent must be assigned to the smallest of them, the Great Northern. On a line of frequent and continuous gradients sixty-seven expresses run a mileage of 6780 at an average speed of 46½ miles.

Its fastest trains used to be four Leeds expresses (two each way) between London and Leeds, in 3¾ hours, and now are four expresses between Manchester and London in 4½ hours, stopping only twice upon the road. Nor are the Scotch expresses far behind, stopping only once between London and York. Between these two places

* Unless perhaps a goods train may be so styled.

they are said to pass the points at no less than 144 junctions on their road.

"Those who remember this express at York in the icy winter of 1879-80, when the few passengers who did not remain thawing themselves at the waiting-room fires, used to stamp up and down a sawdusted platform under a darkened roof, while day after day the train came gliding in from Grantham with couplings like wool, icicles pendent from the carriage eaves, and an air of punctual unconcern,—or those who have known some of our other equally sterling trains—will hardly mind if friendship does let them drift into exaggeration when speaking of expresses."

The express engines of the Great Northern are second only to the extinct nine-feet-wheeled engines of the Bristol and Exeter Railway in the size of their driving wheels, and are unequalled by any narrow-gauge locomotive for speed, strength and appearance. "I love," said the "learned blacksmith," Elihu Burritt, once when speaking of such monsters, "to see one of those huge creatures, with sinews of brass and muscles of iron, strut forth from his stable and, saluting the train of cars with a dozen sonorous puffs from his iron nostrils, fall back gently into his harness. There he stands champering and foaming upon the iron track, his great heart a furnace of glowing coals, his lymphatic blood boiling within his veins, the strength of a thousand horses nerving his sinews, panting to be gone. He would drag St. Peter's across the desert of Sahara if he could be hitched on!"

The North Eastern engines, which take the Scotch trains from York into Edinburgh (running over the North British Railway from Berwick), though very serviceable, do not approach them; and great credit is due to Mr. Stirling for his successful adherence to the single-wheel system on a road of such continuous gradients as the Great Northern.

The longest runs without stopping, on the Great Northern, and the longest in the Kingdom, are between Grantham and King's Cross, 105½ miles, in 2 hours and 4 minutes, an average speed of 51 miles an hour. This distance is done by no less than four trains each day, *all* of which perform the journey within 2 hours and 6 minutes. The highest average speed attained on this line, 52¼ miles, is between Grantham and Doncaster (50½ miles in 58 minutes). The longest run on the North Eastern is from York to Newcastle, 80¼ miles in 1 hour and 42 minutes; and the quickest, York to Darlington, 44¼ miles in 53 minutes—an average speed of 50.

We next come to the Midland, the latest line to come into London, and the most omnivorous and competitive of all if we regard the manner in which its octopus-like arms stretch from Norfolk to

Glamorganshire or from Carlisle to Bournemouth.* This is a line which has the opportunity, and makes use of it, greatly to facilitate provincial communications across country, and has established a capital service of north trains to and from Bristol in connection with the West of England expresses.

The Midland, which is the most democratic of the English lines, on the pseudo-abolition of the middle class (for up to the present there practically remain three classes—Pullman, first, and third) led the way to the introduction of third-class passengers "by all trains," a change most beneficial to the poorer or the more saving class of the community, but one which tends to lower the efficiency of its faster trains, not merely by the addition of a large number of extra passengers, but by those of a less orderly and punctual class. This alteration (which possibly took rise from a letter of Mr. Gladstone to the chairman of the Metropolitan Railway in 1874, in which he advocated the substitution of two classes of passengers for three) has fortunately not been followed by other important lines.†

The longest run on the Midland is from St. Pancras to Leicester, a distance of 99¼ miles performed in 2 hours and 7 minutes, and the quickest for any distance is from St. Pancras to Kettering, 72¼ miles in 1 hour 27 minutes, a fraction under 50 miles an hour over an uneven road.‡

Passing on its way northward over the Cumberland hills—through much wild and savage scenery—the Midland attains a height of 1170 feet above sea-level at Ais Gill.

"There are two things equally fine about this run—the view from the top of the watershed, and the style in which the express engine ascends. The day express, the heaviest, reaches the Blea Moor tunnel 22 minutes after passing Settle (13¾ miles), an *average* speed of 37½ miles an hour. It therefore makes each second a *vertical* step of 6½ inches and a forward movement of 55 feet."

From Carlisle to Edinburgh the Scottish service of this railway is undertaken by the North British over "the Waverley route" without any intervening stoppage. "This," says Mr. Foxwell, "is undoubtedly the hardest of all the routes in the Kingdom along which

* The opposite of this may be noticed in the compact systems of the North Eastern or Great Eastern, hardly broken in upon by other companies.

† Another peculiarity of the Midland Railway is the issue of return tickets at *precisely* the double fare, or as if two single tickets had been dealt out.

‡ Some of the earliest numbers of 'Bradshaw' had sections of all the main lines shown in diagram at the commencement of the work, which were often of much interest to the more intelligent traveller when on his journey.

any train runs at express speed. Twice to climb such gradients (some $\frac{1}{70}$), and yet keep on for 98 miles without a halt, is a feat of Homeric nature." This is done in 2 hours and 20 minutes, at an average speed of 42 miles during the summer months.

"Few people notice the diminution of speed in running up gradients, while the brilliant, though in consequence short, dashes down so impress the imagination (especially as we often finish with this—large towns being on low levels) that the journey seems to have been mainly composed of them. The average impression made on our consciousness is in fact much higher than would be made by the uniform continuance of a speed equal to the average of the different speeds at which we have been running. This is strikingly shown in the case of running between Carlisle and Hawick by the North British. Here, when we have once got up the long ascent of $\frac{1}{75}$ after Newcastleton, and, having passed the tunnel at the top, proceed to sweep down the descent at a pace which seems fabulous, the impression of speed remaining with us at the finish (repeated later when we drop upon Edinburgh from the Fala Moors) is so intense that we are incredulous of the fact that the running average has been only 42."

The best engines of both the Midland and North British Railway are built with coupled driving wheels of some seven feet diameter and with four small bogie wheels in front, as is also the case with the Great Northern engines. These pioneer wheels are supposed to prepare the road in advance for the heavier weight which immediately follows them, and also adjust themselves readily to curves.

We may expect great travelling improvements in the north of Scotland when the completion of the Forth and Tay bridges places the North British Railway in active competition with the Caledonian, and the much needed enlargement is made to the Perth station; while a second line projected to Inverness along the banks of the Caledonian Canal will add a stimulus to the energies of the Highland Railway, often heavily taxed in their gallant struggles with the elements in winter-time.

The most commercially important of English railways is the London and North Western Railway, connecting as it does the Metropolis both with Scotland and Ireland, with North America, and other foreign parts *viâ* Liverpool, and serving large centres such as Birmingham and Manchester. With all this, however, it is by no means the fastest of our trunk lines, although from the exigencies of its traffic it has greater capabilities of speed—and has a more level road—than its neighbours. For one hundred and seventy miles out of London its gauge is quadruple, and the power of assorting trains into "fast" and "slow," by this means, much more than doubles its power for conveyance of traffic. Another element of retardation on this line is no doubt the practice of making up or splitting its more important trains at Crewe, unlike the arrangements of the Great

Western or Great Northern, where each main line has its separate system of express trains. To unite the several parts daily with punctuality at Crewe must entail somewhat "easy timing" of the respective up-trains, while the down-trains would be running with a larger number of vehicles attached than would otherwise be the case. The shareholders, no doubt, reap the benefit of economy of management, though it is a question whether this advantage is not lost by a certain number of passengers travelling by the quicker rival routes.

The Scottish expresses are, from competition, the fastest on the North Western, and on their road to the North attain a height of 915 feet above the sea-level in Cumberland (as against the 1200 of the Midland, and the 360 of the East Coast route nearer London). The longest run on the North Western is only made once a day, from Nuneaton to Willesden, 91½ miles, by the day Scotch express, in 1 hour and 57 minutes—an average speed of 47 miles an hour.

The North Western trains are taken northward from Carlisle by the Caledonian Company over the Beattock incline, 1015 feet above the sea-level.

"The runs of several expresses over this watershed are extremely creditable, particularly that of the down-mail, which averages a speed of 48½ miles per hour on the 73½ miles between Carlisle and Carstairs. The last 10 miles before the [Beattock] summit can hardly take less than 20 minutes (ascent $\frac{1}{80}$), and this leaves only 71 minutes for the remaining 63½ miles, or an average of 53⅔ miles an hour."

South of Carlisle

"The North-Western route is easier than the Midland for *down*-trains, but rather harder for the up; as though the gradients in the latter case are not quite so steep, yet the North Western climbs 850 feet from Carlisle to Shap in 31 miles, as against 1100 feet from Carlisle to Ais Gill in 46 miles. The curves are also sharper than in the case of the Midland, which was built regardless of expense. But allowing for this the speed of the Midland remains a better performance."

The Irish mail service established in its present form in 1860, for which express fares are charged, is the slowest of any important service in the Kingdom, and will remain so even when accelerated a few months hence. The speed averaged by the fastest of the four trains Mr. Foxwell computes at 43⅗, and the speed of the four trains together averages only 42¾ miles per hour. Considering the immense subsidy annually granted by the Post Office, and making allowance for the gradients and curves on the North Wales section, this can hardly be considered creditable to the directors or engineers of the Euston establishment. There is a Government penalty in connection with this train, but which has never yet been enforced, of £1 14*s.*

chargeable for every minute avoidably lost on the journey. The best part of the Irish service is the sea transit by the well-known steamers, *Ulster*, *Munster*, *Leinster*, and *Connaught*, which usually succeed in getting away from the Government Pier at Holyhead, notwithstanding the embarkation of mails, passengers and luggage, in seven or eight minutes after the arrival of the train. Their well-earned popularity recently stood their owners in good stead when last summer the mail contract was taken from them, and was afterwards restored in deference to public opinion.

The express service by the North Western (steel) steamers from Holyhead is also a fast one; and immense sums have been spent by the railway company in the construction of one of the most unique stations in the kingdom there, running round two sides of the packet basin. The steamers arrive alongside the up-platform, or depart from the down, with the same ease as the trains themselves, the whole basin being lit up by the electric light at night.

"The express service of the North Western to Liverpool and Birmingham is considerably spoilt by the waiting at Crewe and Rugby of several trains, and by the slow running on the parts between Crewe and Liverpool and Rugby and Birmingham. Thus, though Manchester has seventeen expresses Liverpool has only ten, in spite of the North Western being the direct thoroughfare from London to America. Birmingham has but eight trains which can possibly be called express,* though between Rugby (which is only 30 miles off) and Euston there are fifty. In fact Birmingham is for its size very poorly served, having a total (North Western and Great Western) of twelve against twenty-eight for Leeds, which is so much farther from the Metropolis."

Liverpool, as well as Ireland, says the authority we have just quoted, cannot boast of obtaining its due speed from the North Western; it is the same distance from Euston as Exeter from Paddington, but its fastest train is 16 minutes longer than "the Dutchman," which latter stops more on the journey. It is hardly fair, however, to compare the time of a narrow-gauge train with that of the leviathans of the West.

The fastest North Western train is from Northampton to Willesden, 60¼ miles in 1 hour and 10 minutes—attaining a high average of 51⅔ miles per hour. The engines of many of the North Western trains take in water without stopping, by an ingeniously contrived apparatus which is plunged into troughs of great length laid between the rails—a plan which has not however been adopted by other lines.

The Great Western, like the Great Eastern, has had a revolution

* A train which exceeds an average speed of 39 miles an hour, stoppages included, is reckoned here as an express. The statistics borrowed in this article were calculated upon the last summer's arrangements.

as regards comfort under its present chairman, but has always carried off the palm of speed by its West of England service, and forty years age the "fast Exeter expresses" performed their journey within fifteen minutes of the time taken to-day by the so-called "Dutchmen." The superiority of the broad to the narrow gauge (and of the longitudinal to the cross sleeper) for speed, safety,* and comfort, is beyond dispute, and the line having been laid out under superintendence of Brunel is a masterpiece of engineering.† In the whole distance between London and Exeter only two gradients of any note present themselves, near Box and near Wellington, notwithstanding the numerous watersheds traversed *en route*.

"The Great Western has not yet entirely emerged from its state of transition. A short time ago it was an unprofitable tangle of separate lines, for the most part ill-conditioned and with miserable accommodation. Now it forms a compact organism of 2300 miles (the largest in the kingdom), with first-rate carriages and permanent way. It has the smoothest running track in the kingdom, and the speed between Paddington and Swindon is the highest of any long run in England."

The fastest trains on the Great Western are naturally the broad-gauge ones (to the West of England); and those leaving Paddington at 11.45 A.M. and 3.0 P.M. with the two corresponding up-trains are the quickest in the world, allowance being made for time stopped at stations on the road. At some of the stations they pass on the road these trains are literally timed to the second in the running time-books, the quarter-minutes being given. An afternoon narrow-gauge express to and from Birkenhead is also distinguished by such speed that, travelling by a much longer route *viâ* Didcot, it used to afford a quicker service to the more important midland towns than that by the direct lines to the Metropolis.

The service on the South Wales trunk line is not so rapid, and it is probable that little alteration will be made in it until the opening of the Severn Tunnel and the Milford Docks render a complete

* Demonstrated in the most emphatic manner by the Langley (1845), West Drayton (1874), and Bourton (1876) accidents, in which comparatively little injury was done to life notwithstanding the almost unprecedented nature of the catastrophes.

† The so-called extravagances of Brunel as time wears on are not found to contrast unfavourably with some of the more economical (?) constructions of his great rival Stephenson—e.g. the costly tunnel at Kilsby, which has now been altogether avoided by the new North Western main line by a slight detour of little more than a mile, or the sea wall at Penmaenmawr, which to this day requires on that calm seaboard a ducal income for its maintenance and repairs; or the viaduct at Llandulas, which, falling over a year or two ago, led to a most costly interruption of the traffic between England and Ireland for several weeks.

reorganisation of the traffic arrangements necessary. At present the growing ports of Swansea, Cardiff, and Newport do not receive all the advantages they are entitled to by their rising importance. Tenby, the Torquay of Wales, is also deserving of quicker transit.

The only strictly limited mail train in the kingdom is that between London and Bristol and *vice versâ*, but like most mail-trains it does not equal the speed of the crack day trains. The up-train in particular is capable of great improvement west of Exeter.* Before the amalgamations a few years ago, the trains in question ran over the lines of no less than five different companies—the Great Western, the Bristol and Exeter, the South Devon, the Cornwall, and the West Cornwall—while in the extreme west the paucity of traffic was not favourable to special train service. The line is still a single track at Dawlish, while from Plymouth it is entirely so to the Land's End. Added to the disadvantages of working a single line, the frequent curves, viaducts† and gradients, some of exceeding severity—as for instance in the neighbourhood of Totnes, where the Valley of the Dart is crossed nearly at right angles—and the absence of much competition with other lines, it will be understood that there is a natural tendency to abatement of speed on this section of the line.

The speed quoted in the foregoing pages must be quite understood to be the *average* one, and if the journeys were performed upon a level road would be immensely higher. A locomotive, for instance, ascending the Totnes inclines just alluded to, is required to exert seven times its normal power to overcome the gradient, and the loss of time to a fast train in ascending is *never* recovered by greatest speed on the following descent.

* It is not to be expected under the present administration of the Post Office that the existing state of affairs in the Western Mail service will remain long unaltered now that the amalgamation of the principal railways in this part of England has paved the way for improvement. The whole of the acceleration expected, however, is less than one hour. We venture to think that the commercial interests of Plymouth and Cornwall would benefit by a more radical alteration. In the absence of any midnight train from Paddington, the existing limited mail might leave London one hour later than it now does, reaching Plymouth at the same time as at present, and Penzance half an hour earlier. The up-mail should leave Penzance about 7.0, Plymouth 9.30, Exeter 11.15, and would reach London at the same time as at present. The alterations of time effected by these changes at Bristol would also admit of the South Wales up-mail train leaving Milford, Swansea or Cardiff nearly an hour later, in itself no unimportant matter, and the alterations necessitated in the Midland trains to and from Bristol might readily be adjusted.

† The celebrated Cornish viaducts, like the broad-gauge, are gradually disappearing, and their delicate tracery is being superseded by the massive granite arches which replace them.

As Professor Foxwell says:

"Suppose an engine able to draw its usual load 60 miles an hour on the level comes to an ascent of 10 miles of $\frac{1}{100}$ followed by a similar descent. Suppose also that the speed falls to (an average of) 30 miles going up, and that going down the train runs (an average of) 90 miles an hour—going up each mile takes two minutes, therefore the 10-mile ascent takes twenty minutes—going down each mile occupies two-thirds of a minute, therefore the 10-mile descent takes $6\frac{2}{3}$ minutes, $26\frac{2}{3}$ minutes altogether up and down; i.e. the whole 20 miles take $6\frac{2}{3}$ minutes more than they would have done upon the level—a loss of $\frac{1}{3}$ more time. But now in actual practice the loss is greater again than this. For however slowly the gradient may cause the train to ascend, when it comes to descend the other side it must not as a rule be allowed to run faster than about 70 miles an hour. Curves, permanent way, wear and tear of carriages, and other considerations, forbid it."

Again, the chief towns being in the valleys, the trains are stopped at the very time they may have acquired a momentum for the ascent of an opposite gradient.*

On railways like the Metropolitan,† where all trains as a rule stop at every station, it has been suggested by one of the leading engineers of the day that the levels should be arranged so that trains arriving at each station should be retarded by an ascent, and those departing accelerated by the corresponding descent—certainly a more agreeable process than the violent applications of the continuous brakes now common.

No doubt in former days, when there was more irregularity in the running, and lines were less crowded than now, occasional very high speeds were sometimes recorded when making up time, and which drivers are now, in the face of the registers kept in every signal cabin, and the premiums for coal saved, more chary of indulging in.

Of late years both permanent way and rolling stock have been greatly improved, and the convenience of the public studied in a manner formerly unknown.‡

* A further actual loss of time caused by gradients is due to the increase of distance in receding from and reapproaching the earth's centre. This of course does not affect the average of speed.

† Express trains were also essayed for a time on this line when it was first opened, but for obvious reasons were very shortly afterwards discontinued.

‡ "A first-class compartment used to seat six passengers, and, as in addition to being very low it was very narrow, travellers' knees were pressed uncomfortably hard against those of their opposite neighbours. But the traveller second class had far greater discomfort to complain of. His seat was a bare board, and unless provided with a good umbrella the chances argued in favour of a wet skin, for all second-class carriages were open to the weather on either side. A framework with seats fitted on the bed

Two of the most important adjuncts to quick train service have been the general adoption of the block system—too well known and appreciated to need description here—and the introduction of continuous brakes, a more doubtful improvement.*

Some of the advantages of these innovations are brought out in a very striking manner in a calculation recently made by Mr. Frederick Haggard, which shows that in the three years 1868–70 the compensation paid for injury by the fourteen principal companies of the United Kingdom averaged £439 for every 100,000 miles run, while in the three years 1880–82 the equivalent amount had been reduced to an average of £206.

Stouter permanent way, longer carriages upon bogie wheels, india-rubber fittings to the windows, more reclining space and better light, all tend to make the journey of to-day far easier, if not in all cases much more rapid, than it was a few years ago.

As we have already pointed out, however, these advantages are to be principally enjoyed on the north side of London, and it behoves the southern lines to be warned in time what use they make of their monopoly. Brighton is threatened with a new railway, and Southampton will be in a few months in possession of a second line of communications, while no unwilling ear would be lent in the south-eastern district to the announcements of possible competition.

On the other hand important places such as York, Newcastle, Norwich, Bristol, or Torquay, though principally dependent upon one company's service, may rest well satisfied with their present accommodation.

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of a carriage truck constituted the vehicle in which third-class passengers travelled in those days. On a wet day the condition of poor wretches compelled by poverty to travel in such conveyances may be more easily imagined than described. If they turned their backs to the storm the rain ran down their necks; if they faced the storm their eyes were blinded and their pockets filled with water."

* The improved brakes, while invaluable in cases of sudden emergency, are too frequently used as a means of gaining time by abrupt stoppages which put a too severe tension upon every particle of the train (besides an unnecessary vibration to the spine, or sudden shock to the heart, of the frequent passenger), and, moreover, by encouraging drivers to run close up to obstacles, prepare the way for collision in event of the brake failing for once to act at the critical moment. What *can* be done with these brakes may be best seen from the following figures taken from a report of a Royal Commission on the subject: "Speed 60 miles an hour, stopping distance 400 yards; speed 50 miles, stopping distance 275 yards; speed 40 miles, stopping distance 180 yards; speed 30 miles, stopping distance 100 yards."

The Four Silverpennys.

Mr. Silverpenny was a bachelor, who, at sixty-seven, found himself with few friends and no relations to lay claim to the very respectable fortune he had amassed by years of labour and self-denial.

As is not unfrequently the case, now that he had climbed to the top of the ladder he found that, so far as he was concerned, the pleasure of making the money far exceeded the pleasure of spending it. The habits of years cannot be cast aside in a day, and to be lavish or even liberal needs, as most other qualities do, a certain amount of education. This as regarded expenditure Mr. Silverpenny had never had. He had come to the town where he lived, when a mere boy, had worked his way upwards from clerk to master, and, retired now from business, he lived in an unpretentious house, his wants attended to by a faithful, honest housekeeper, who closed her hand as tightly over her master's money as she did over her own. The two had grown old together, and their peculiarities and the practice of their small economies were now a part of their nature. To alter his surroundings, go to a more fashionable quarter of the town, live in any other way than he did, never occurred to Mr. Silverpenny. One care alone weighed heavily on him, and that was to decide what he should do with his money. Nothing in the newspapers interested him half as much as the wills of the various persons, their bequests, and how they disposed of their property; but though these perusals—extending over many years now—had afforded him much varied and strange information, up to the present date he had not come across any favourable precedent for the solution of his difficulty.

There were hospitals, orphanages, charities without number, each and every one calling loudly for support from him; but even while living, Mr. Silverpenny turned a deaf ear to such appeals, agreeing with his old housekeeper, Martha, that such places went mostly "to harbour idle vagabonds." No, he had not toiled for such as these.

Churches? In his opinion there were already too many. Schools? It was enough if boys could write and read. Poor Mr. Silver-

penny! had he carried his £70,000 on his back he could hardly have felt its burden more heavily.

The 20th of May was his birthday, and according to custom, Martha, who had marked the festival by her choice of his dinner, was detained after clearing the cloth away to drink a glass of wine to the health of her master.

"Sixty-seven you be," she said, setting down on the table the glass from which she had sipped—"twelve months older than you was this day last year. Hm! well you looks it," and she regarded him fixedly.

Mr. Silverpenny winced under Martha's searching eye. He knew, as well as she did, that there was truth in her candour. During the past year, for some reason unknown, he had felt that he was sliding down life's hill two steps at a time, and it was with a sigh that he answered, "Quite true, Martha, I'm beginning to feel an old man."

"Oh, 'twant o' that I was thinking, for I follows so close behind ye that when you dies through fright of old age I shall quake for fear, but 'tis— Well, you ain't the man you was, master."

Mr. Silverpenny nodded his head assentingly.

"And," continued Martha, "'tis time that if I was you I should put my house in order." Mr. Silverpenny did not answer, but he stroked his chin meditatively.

"Ha'n't ye got no relations o' no kind nowheres?"

Martha had long been acquainted with her master's difficulty.

No. Mr. Silverpenny had no relations whatever. "Mine is a very uncommon name," he said, "very."

"I'll bound if you went up to London you'd find Silverpennys in plenty. Oh, now, you don't know, master"—for Mr. Silverpenny had given her to see how he dissented from her—"why look to me, Martha Green, I've neither kith nor kin so far as I know by; but if I'd got money to leave away, take my word if there wouldn't spring up a reg'lar crop o' Greens to claim relation with me. And so with Silverpennys—there ain't any other here 'tis true, but up to London, don't tell me; I'll wager you'd find 'em there in scores."

This argument had frequently before been advanced by Martha, and as frequently pooh-poohed by Mr. Silverpenny, but driven to his wits' ends to know what else to do, although he did not say so to her, he entertained the thought now more seriously, brooded on it that night, and the result was that some six weeks later Mr. Silverpenny announced to Martha his intention of starting for London on the morrow.

"That's right," she said approvingly, "and what you ought to have done long ago."

The root of many of our paradoxical eccentricities might be traced to vanity, and without doubt some feeling of this kind had prompted Mr. Silverpenny to desire that the fortune he had to leave should be inherited by some one who at least bore his name. As he had said to Martha, it was a singular one, and when, the morning after his arrival in London, desiring the waiter of the hotel to procure for him the Post Office Directory for that year, he opened the book to begin his search, he felt a certain degree of trepidation.

There were Silversides and Silverstones, Silverlocks and Silverthornes, but in all the "Court" portion a Silverpenny—not one. Still, that was only half the book. There was the commercial list yet to run through, with no better success—not—stay though. Yes, and he read, "Silverpenny, John James, baker, 21 New Street, Old Kent Road." Martha was not right although not absolutely wrong, the scores of Silverpennys like the cats had turned out to be one. Summoning the waiter, Mr. Silverpenny desired that he might be directed to the Old Kent Road. An omnibus which passed close by he found would take him there, and he was soon deposited some twenty yards distant from the baker's door.

The shop was a modest one, with its window full of bread, at which Mr. Silverpenny stood staring, trying to find some excuse for going in. Naturally he did not wish to at once blurt out his reasons for coming. Yet what could he ask for? there was nothing but bread there—not a biscuit—not a bun. He walked past and back again, and then, not being given to hesitation, he stepped in.

"A roll," echoed the baker's wife; "certainly," and she handed him two, saying: "That's to-day's, this is a stale one."

Mr. Silverpenny made his choice. At the same time asking might he be allowed to eat it there. "I'm a trifle tired," he said, "and it will rest me."

"Johnny, bring out a chair here."

"That's good," thought Mr. Silverpenny, "they've a boy," but, to his disappointment, the bearer of the chair was the baker, who, placing it for him, remarked that the weather was hot but seasonable, and then, presuming that his customer came from the country, he inquired how the crops might be looking down his way.

Mr. Silverpenny gave the best answer he could to the question, for being a town-bred man, except in the grain he didn't know cockle from corn. Whatever he said, however, seemed to satisfy the baker, who needed only the very smallest opportunity to let his tongue run glibly, and, to Mr. Silverpenny's satisfaction, the roll was not half got through before he was able to introduce the

subject which he had kept ready all the while, by saying, "Your name, Silverpenny, is a very uncommon one."

"Ah, I believe you," said the baker complacently. "There ain't another Silverpenny in all London."

"Not as you know of, Johnny," said his wife circumspectly.

"Not that nobody knows of," asserted the baker confidently; "and more than that, I don't believe you'd find more than one other than me if you was to search through all England."

"And he is, I suppose, related to you?" said Mr. Silverpenny cautiously.

"No, not as I know of in any way, though he's the sort of friend that sticks closer than a brother, and so he's proved himself to me, and I'm proud to be beholden to one who bears the name of Silverpenny."

"He always holds to it," said the wife, "that you two must be related to one another; he's a rector," she added, to Mr. Silverpenny, "and's got a parish of his own in the country."

Fortunately for the satisfaction of Mr. Silverpenny's curiosity, the attention of the baker's wife was at this moment engrossed by the advent of the greengrocer, and while that worthy housewife chaffered over the prices of cabbages and onions, Mr. Silverpenny adroitly made himself master of the baker's past history. It was a very simple one—he had fallen ill, and left his situation to go to a hospital, from which he was sent out weak, and all but penniless, to make his way back to London. At a country town on the way he had completely broken down, and declared that he must have died from want had not the curate there—the other Silverpenny—heard his name and helped him on; "and that did not end all he did for me," he added, "he lent me money, he gave me clothes, and he wrote a letter to a friend he had here—well, the parson of that very church which, if you come to where I'm standing, its spire you can see; and, as it turned out, Mr. Webber, that was the clergyman's name, knew of a party here, a baker, as from being old and infirm, wanted a brisk young chap to keep things going. Mr. Silverpenny answered for me, and whether he was foolish or wise in his man, is best shown, inasmuch as that business is now mine. The old gentleman is gone, and I stand in his shoes as master here. She," and he indicated his wife, "was his niece. I tell her I took her with the fixtures. Ah, well, I might ha' done worse. The bad job is, we've got no children, you see. 'Tis a pity, ain't it, a tidy business like this, and nobody to leave it to?"

"The other one—the rector I mean—is a rich man I suppose."

"Rich! Ah, bless ye, not he, he's as poor as a church mouse, and

would be if he'd got the double of what he's got now; but he's a gentleman every inch of him, and a Christian too; and, as I say, if he don't go to heaven, I don't know who will. 'Twill be a poor look-out for such as me and you."

Mr. Silverpenny did not pick up the stone cast at him.

"Where might this gentleman live?" he said, "and is he married —has he a family?"

"Yes, there's a boy—one—and a fine chap he is. He's schooling at Harrow. They pinched themselves to let him go, and I send him a cake whenever I can, a real good one too, no mistake," and he winked his eye. "He'd tell ye, would Master Charlie, that it ain't half a bad thing to have a friend a baker."

"I should agree with him," said Mr. Silverpenny.

"Ah, I'd do more than that for the son of his father," said the baker. "I was a stranger and he took me in—hungry and he fed me—naked and he clothed me. That's what I call acting up to Scripture, I do."

"And all because of your being called Silverpenny?"

"Well, so he said; but, bless you, if not, he'd ha' done the same; not mind, but he's proud of the name, oh very, and so am I too, and rightly I take it, when there's but the two, John James Silverpenny, baker, 21 New Street, Old Kent Road, and the Rev. Anthony Charles Silverpenny, rector of Gapthorn, near Colchester —Essex, you know."

Once in possession of the information he wanted, Mr. Silverpenny soon brought his visit to a close. At parting, he shook the friendly baker by the hand, and as soon as he was out of sight of the shop he hailed a cab, and telling the driver where he wished to go, was soon deposited at the Fenchurch Street Station. Fortune favoured his plans so far, that a train for Colchester was shortly starting; and having arrived that far, and fortified himself for the two miles' walk to Gapthorn, he started for the rectory.

This time he meant to adopt another plan, he would no longer suppress his cognomen, but boldly send in his card bearing the name of Silverpenny.

"Silverpenny! and not my friend the baker."

The rector, into whose sanctum Mr. Silverpenny had been taken, looked at him with curiosity.

Assuredly it never entered into the reverend gentleman's mind to suppose that the possessor of a fortune stood before him. Our good friend, always a little inclined to look shabby, was now in addition dusty and travel-stained, the heat, excitement, and hurry had in no ways improved him, and he had not Martha near to set out his proper linen.

In the rector's sight here was a man old and needy, and it was in a softened voice he next spoke to him:

"And so, my friend, you bear the name of Silverpenny; well, I am glad to see you, for I thought there were only two left of that name."

"And I," said Mr. Silverpenny, "feared there was but one.

"No, no," and the rector laughed cheerily; "not so badly off as that yet, each Silverpenny has two to help him—ah, isn't it so?" and he wondered into what straits the old man's necessities had reduced him.

"You speak there, sir, with authority," said Mr. Silverpenny, and then to enlighten him further, he added, "I have been to New Street, and seen the baker, who told me his story."

"Oh, ah—I see—yes—but don't rely too much on that fellow, he has too long a tongue and too good a memory, I tell him. A mere nothing the help he got from me. He owes everything to his own industry—he's a fine specimen—a very fine specimen—a credit to the name of Silverpenny."

"May I ask if you came from Blankshire?" said Mr. Silverpenny anxiously. "It is my county. I was born at Wishton there."

"No, my friend, no. We are Essex people all so far as I can tell. I was born the other side of Colchester here, the only son of my mother, and she a widow, and I myself," and he stifled a rising sigh, "am in a very similar condition, my poor wife is recently dead, and I am left with one ewe lamb, an only son."

"Master Charlie?"

"Ah, that fellow the baker spoke of him to you, did he?—the rascal, he stuffs him with cakes and sweets of all kinds, sends him a hamper to school, spoils him, you know; but he's a good boy, is Charlie, and I trust will grow up to be a good man. I pray that he may prove worthy of our name of Silverpenny, and you, my friend, must ask it for him too. The world is full of pitfalls. Youth needs a steady helmsman."

"You must give me his proper name," said Mr. Silverpenny.

"I will, I'll write it down for you to assist your memory. Anthony Charles Silverpenny, aged 13, born the 1st of May. There now, you won't forget him," and he handed over the slip of paper, adding, "You have not told me yet how I can serve you."

"You're very good, but my object in coming was merely to satisfy the curiosity I had to see another man who bore the name of Silverpenny."

"In that case you must stay and see my son; he is home for a holiday—not in now, but he will be presently."

And the rector proffered an invitation that Mr. Silverpenny should remain and accept from him some hospitality, but this his visitor declined—he had to get back to the station, and he did not wish to miss the next train; so after a little more conversation as to the town he was born in, the occupations he followed—questions answered with great reticence—the two parted, the rector at his gate watching Mr. Silverpenny out of sight.

Lost in thought, some half-way on, the old man found he had missed his turning, and standing a little perplexed as to what he should do, over the hedge a boy sprung up, who Mr. Silverpenny felt at once must be Charlie.

"I have come out of my way," he began; "could you put me in the right track for Colchester, young gentleman?"

"Yes; I've just come from there."

"Oh, what, that way, over the fields, can I go?"

"And by it you'll save a quarter of an hour. I ain't in much hurry, I'll go that far with you, because if you took the wrong turn then you'd go a mile out of your way."

"I suppose you know this place well?" said Mr. Silverpenny.

"Rather, my father's rector of Gapthorn—Mr. Silverpenny."

"Silverpenny!"

"Yes, a very uncommon name ours is; some of our fellows laugh at me for it; but I think it's a capital name, don't you?"

"Yes, I think it is."

Mr. Silverpenny said this so slowly that Master Charlie was induced to look at him more observantly. "You're tired, ain't you?" he said. "Have you walked far?"

"Pretty well for an old man like me; I'm not so young, you see, as you are."

"No," said Charlie, and then he added rather irrelevantly as Mr. Silverpenny thought, "I've been to Colchester, and had some toffy and black-jack. I wish I hadn't now."

Mr. Silverpenny smiled. "I don't know about toffy and black-jack, but I fancy if I had a little more inside me I should manage to step out a little more nimbly."

"You're close by now. You've only to turn down this lane—look, there's the station you see," and coming to a stand-still, Charlie eyed Mr. Silverpenny furtively, blushed furiously red, and catching hold of his hand, which he shook awkwardly, he ran as fast as he could away. Feeling something in his palm, Mr. Silverpenny looked down. Into it the boy had pressed a penny. His regret at having eaten the toffy at Colchester was because he had spent all but that of his money.

On the following day Mr. Silverpenny started on his return home; he reached his house in safety, and was welcomed back by Martha, who, sagacious woman as she was, made neither comment, nor asked a question respecting the business of his journey.

That it had not been made without some result she guessed from the arrival of Mr. Stock the lawyer, with whom Mr. Silverpenny was closeted for several days after at various times.

Clearing the table one evening as usual, her master detained her. "Martha," he said, pouring out a glass of wine, "drink that to the health of Anthony Charles Silverpenny."

"Ah!" she held up her finger to him, "what did I say?"

"Why, what isn't true," he answered quickly—"that I should find in London scores of Silverpennys; whereas, search from end to end, there is only one."

"No matter," continued Martha stoutly; "for all you wants one's so good as twenty, and it's he is it who's health I'm to drink to?"

"No," answered her master stolidly, "it is not he."

Martha pushed the glass, which she had taken, away from her, "Awh!" and she crossed her arms resignedly.

Mr. Silverpenny enjoyed the momentary satisfaction of her defeat, and then in a more friendly tone he said, "Never be overhasty in jumping at conclusions, Martha, it is a woman's failing. Wait, and you shall hear the whole story." And thereupon he related his interview with the baker—his visit to the rector, and how he had fallen in with Charlie.

Martha listened attentively. "And 'tis he you've left your money to?" she said inquiringly. "Well! to think of his giving you a penny—have 'e got un, master? Let me have a look at un, do."

Slowly the penny was drawn from out of Mr. Silverpenny's pocket, he unfolded it from the paper he had wrapped it in, and solemnly handed it to Martha, who held it in her hand, turning it over and over again.

"Take it, master," she said, handing it back to him, "and keep it so long as ever you live—I should if I was you."

Mr. Silverpenny smiled as if he had already arrived at that decision.

"And I'm very took with that baker too," continued Martha reflectively; "*he* makes good bread I'll warrant un too." Mr. Silverpenny did not dispel Martha's illusion by telling her that, judging by the roll he had eaten, he should pronounce the baker's bread to be heavy.

"I have not forgotten him," he said, "and I have not forgotten you, Martha."

"Oh, I ain't afraid," she said shortly; "I don't ask what you've done, or what you haven't; all I wants to know is, that the matter's settled so that your mind's at rest and you feel easy."

"Yes, quite, so far as others go."

"Well, and don't that satisfy you?"

For a moment Mr. Silverpenny did not reply. "I expect," he said reflectively, "that most of us if we had our time to go over again would act differently."

"Why, what now?" said Martha sharply.

"Nothing, Martha, nothing—only I can't remember that I ever held out a helping hand to anybody—gave away anything—did any good with my money."

"And suppose not," said Martha irately, "you ha'n't a done no evil, and if that's all you've got to lament over, you may lie down in your bed easy, and it's my opinion that you wouldn't be doing wrong in going there," and she surveyed him critically; "jaunting about and your time o' life don't overwell agree together, master."

"I think I'll take your advice," said Mr. Silverpenny, rising slowly; "and Martha, we'll turn over a new leaf, and you and I we'll try between us to do somebody a little good before we die."

"Oh, there's time enough yet to talk about dying," said Martha gruffly. "You ain't bound to do that the very minute you've made your will and settled your money."

Mr. Silverpenny smiled cheerily. She had brought him over the candle, which, lighting, he took from her. "Now," he said, "drink up your wine. Charles Anthony Silverpenny, health, wealth, and prosperity."

The next morning Mr. Silverpenny was long in coming down, and Martha, thinking it time to awaken him, tip-toed softly into his room. "Master," she called, but he did not answer—"Master," she repeated louder, drawing aside the curtain, "how sound you be sleeping," and then she bent down in terror—it was the sleep from which there is no awaking. Tranquil and calm, Mr. Silverpenny lay dead.

Last Reminiscences of Anthony Trollope.

SEVEN years ago, before he had been threatened with any symptom of decay, in the midst of full contentment and success, Anthony Trollope finished the last words of his 'Autobiography'; so closing the record of his literary life, when it was in truth by no means finished. 'The Duke's Children,' 'Ayala's Angel,' 'Frau Trohman,' 'The Fixed Period,' the 'Life of Thackeray,' 'Cicero,' 'An Eye for an Eye,' and some other stories, had not been published, nor had his imagination began to fail, or his routine been in any way altered, He wrote that year, of himself:

"I observe when people of my age are spoken of, they are described as effete and moribund, just burning down the last half inch of the candle in the socket. I feel as though I should still like to make a 'flare up' with my half inch. In spirit I could trundle a hoop about the streets, and could fall in love with a young woman just as readily as ever; as she doesn't want me, I don't—but I could."

The time left unrecorded was of no less interest than that earlier one; it was still full of profit and pleasure, and was possibly richer in the means of judging fairly of the failures and the successes of authorship. If he expected a little less of himself, if he exacted less, he still performed certain methodical tasks. The punctual and deliberate habits of years were only slightly modified in strictness, and there was certainly no idle moment of his day.

But still the record was closed. It must be a matter of regret that it was so, and the critic who best understood him does not hesitate to express his surprise that the popular author should have chosen to cut his own written life short, and consider it rounded and completed at this particular date, but the reason is doubtless to be found in the painful affection of the hand from which he had begun to suffer, and which is called the writer's cramp, although by no means solely confined to authors.

It becomes difficult to hold a pen, and though the difficulty may, at first, be overcome by a vigorous effort, it is soon found that no amount of effort will prevail. In such cases there is no remedy but rest. The novels and most of the correspondence had to be written from dictation, although he still kept a few friends as the recipients of what he himself described as the illegible scrawl regarded by him

as his own letters to his own special correspondents, "and which," he added, "they tell me afterwards they can't make out a word of."

He found in his niece, who was to him the tenderest and most devoted of daughters, an untiring and reliable secretary; but still, the record of daily personal impressions could not be carried on with the same spontaneous ease as heretofore, so it was brought to an end, and the farewell spoken, as if already from the further shore.

But still the old accustomed method of literary industry was pursued. No one ever acted up more fully to his own convictions or followed more conscientiously himself the advice he gave to others; insisting constantly that the author wants a habit of industry as well as every other workman.

"I was once told," he says, "that the surest aid to the writing of a book was a piece of cobbler's wax on my chair." And in another paragraph:

"There are those who think that the man who works with his imagination should allow himself to wait till—inspiration moves him. When I have heard such doctrine preached I have hardly been able to repress my scorn. To me it would not be more absurd if the shoemaker were to wait for inspiration, or the tallow chandler for the divine moment of melting. I certainly believe in the cobbler's wax much more than the inspiration."

But when such words as these are quoted they must not be made to mean more than he himself means by them, and he continues:

"It will be said perhaps that a man whose work has risen to no higher pitch than mine has attained has no right to speak of the strains and impulses to which real genius is exposed. I am ready to admit the great variations of brain power which are exhibited by the products of different men, and am not disposed to rank my own very high; but my own experience tells me that a man can always do the work for which his brain is fitted, if he will give himself the habit of regarding his work as a normal condition of his life."

During their residence in Montagu Square some hours of writing were accomplished before the midday breakfast, leaving the rest of the day more free for other business, and for the enjoyments which were no less energetically pursued.

To this partly foreign and wholly substantial meal, any intimate friend was welcome, and those who came for counsel, or sympathy, might count on both, and solid information and assistance too, which always might be had for asking.

A not too hurried interview might be obtained in the quaint and quiet book-room, where his five thousand volumes had been carefully stored; and after a search upon the chimneypiece amongst a whole army of spectacles for the exact pair which should enable him to read the face of his guest, he would take his own arm-chair: not however

occupying it for long, but jumping up violently, and taking up his usual position on the hearthrug, too impetuous even for the appearance of ease. It was here, as Mr. Escott graphically describes, the identity of the man and the author was immediately perceived.

"As it is with the dialogue of Anthony Trollope's literary heroes and heroines so was it with his own conversation. In each the same definiteness and directness, the same Anglo-Saxon simplicity. Mr. Trollope, as if he were riding across country, sees the exact place at which he wants to arrive; he makes for it, and he determines to reach it as directly as possible. There may be obstacles, but he surmounts them—sometimes they may prove, for the moment, serious impediments: perhaps they actually place him *hors de combat* like a post and rails that cannot be negotiated, or a ditch of impracticable dimensions. It does not matter. He picks himself up, pulls himself together, and presses on as before."

He used to complain that one had to apologise nowadays for all eagerness.

"We are all so very smooth," he writes, "in our usual intercourse that any urgency takes the guise of violence. I own I like a good contradictory conversation in which for the moment the usual subserviency of coat and trousers to bodies, skirts, and petticoats, may be—well—not forgotten—but for the moment put on one side."

The writer of these lines was once emboldened to request from him an introductory letter to the Editor of the 'Fortnightly,' and was asked, with look and manner well characterised by Wilkie Collins as the embodiment of a gale of wind,

"But why the 'Fortnightly'? The learned editor is so indefatigable, that every word you write down will be weighed to the last pronoun. Perhaps you wish to be so weighed—but you are ignorant! ignorant! *not of what you ought to know—but of what you ought not to know!*"

I.e. the characteristics of editors and the different requirements of magazines. This was explained with an inimitable force and facility of diction; an enormous amount of information was hurled about, and then the storm subsided, the article in question was glanced at, and the letter written. A similar gust was raised on mention being made of a highly eulogistic article on his own personal and literary merits, from the pen of a partial writer. He was sensitively alive to anything of that kind of praise seeming to be the product rather of personal love than of inquiry or judgment, and in a letter alluding to the article, he said, "I don't like such notices, particularly when they are written by friends. I would much rather be left to the mercies of the real critics. Sydney Smith used to say, speaking of practical jokes, that it was impossible to say how much melted butter a gentleman would bear to have poured into his dress-

coat pocket; I dislike it almost as much when it is poured down my back."

This sensitiveness as to the personal details of private life was doubtless very strong in him, but like some other of his strongly expressed opinions, may be practically exaggerated. It has been so forcibly present to his relations and friends that his true and most uncommon character has hardly been so well defined for the sake of those who shall come after him, as it has every right to be, and it would be very regrettable should the delicacy of the living man be seriously allowed to rob his memory of that which is his due.

There is certainly such a thing as a misleading reticence, and in the preface to the 'Autobiography' some honest tribute seems to be missing.

The book will live as the exact and faithful portrait of the man, and might well have been supplemented by a few more finished touches telling, as his own words could not so fully do, how simple, how straightforward, how sincere he was, with what a tender heart, and what an open hand. Had this been not withheld, there would have been less room for offhand ignorant criticism such as lately found a place in a prominent review, where an impression is produced, at least as false as it is ignorant, that Anthony Trollope's vehemence was roughness, and his manner coarse. The critic says that he went to dine with Stuart Mill, and that "the party was only a moderate success. The contrast was too violent between the modesty and courtesy of the host and the blustering fashions of Trollope. These came out worse when they figured in the same room with the gentle precision of Mill and the pleasant gravity of Cairns. It was a relief to get the bull safely away from the china shop."

As a matter of simple justice such false impressions should be balanced by a more faithful testimony. It should be told that he was a perfect gentleman in every fibre of his nature, that he was astoundingly chivalrous, and that his manner, however vehement, was never ungentle. It was very truly said of him:

> "Enthusiasm—it may be impetuosity—is only one of the accidental modes of development assumed by his imagination. It has become a species of necessary condition of his thought; and just as great athletes find it desirable frequently to exercise their muscles and sinews by wielding dumb-bells, brandishing Indian clubs, and other feats of strength, so does Mr. Trollope keep his mental elasticity fresh and vigorous by tilting against windmills and by defending paradoxes."

A fear of hurting anybody's feelings was one of his strongest characteristics, and though he dearly liked a "delicious feud," however violent his words might be, his sentiments were always soft.

In the summer of 1880 the Trollopes left London and went to

live at Harting, a village on the confines of Hampshire, chosen because they found there a house to suit them, and the end of that year Anthony Trollope wrote:

"Yes, we have changed our mode of life altogether. We have got a little cottage here, just big enough (or nearly so) to hold my books, with five acres and a cow and a dog and a cock and a hen. I have got seventeen years' lease, and therefore I hope to lay my bones here. Nevertheless I am as busy as would be one thirty years younger, in cutting out dead boughs, and putting up a paling here and a little gate there. We go to church and mean to be very good, and have maids to wait on us. The reason for all this I will explain when I see you, although, as far as I see at present, there is no good reason other than that we were tired of London."

The life at Harting was very happy; the Rector of his little village has described it in a few brief sentences written with the regard Trollope always won at first sight from all who were in any way brought near him.

"Though he rigidly maintained his lifelong habits of industry, he was no recluse, and his genial frankness soon made him the honoured friend of us all. The sick poor in particular found him a staunch benefactor. To the last he was never weary of generous deeds, generally done on the spur of the moment. A labourer of looting propensities and unable to obtain farm work, employed at Mr. Trollope's fences, was seen by the gardener to take some fallen apples. The master was informed, and the gardener suggested the policeman. Mr. Trollope, apparently in thunder, left his sanctum, and found the culprit eating his dinner under a tree, a piece of bread in one hand and an apple in the other.

"'Who allowed you to take my apples?' said the thunder.

"'I had nothing but bread, and it's better with an apple,' quothed Ishmael.

"Mr. Trollope walked indoors, cut some slices of ham and cheese from the luncheon table, took them out and threw them into the man's lap, saying:

"'Eat and *be better*.'"

With characteristic tenderness of conscience he afterwards doubted if he had done rightly, or the tale of his mercy would never have been told.

But alas! the happy time at Harting had to be brought to a close.

The health which had been so strong was evidently failing, and he often spoke more seriously than in jest of his own novelette, 'The Fixed Period,' then coming out in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' declaring it to be his own unaffected opinion that it would be well if England were to adopt the laws of Britannula, and abolish the miseries, weakness, and *fainéant* imbecility of old age by the pre-arranged ceasing to live of those who would otherwise become old.

It was at the close of a lively morning-visit that he first told one of his greatest friends that his life was in danger, saying in the most

common conversational tone, "I have had a terrible verdict pronounced against me since I saw you last. They say I have got angina pectoris. I am to eat and drink, and get up and sit down at my peril, and may drop down dead at any moment." He subsequently consulted Dr. Murrell, the well-known authority on angina pectoris, who did not endorse the verdict, but found that his heart was weak, and that hard work had made an old man of him.

For more than a year he remained under the same medical care, and got comparatively well. He was enabled to resume his favourite exercise, and his usual animated life, being, however, fairly warned, and that impressively, that he must neither over-work nor over-exert himself. The injunction was perfectly vain. He was extraordinarily impatient and reckless of his own condition; would still dash out of railway-carriages before the stopping of the train, would hurry in and out of cabs, and give way in all things to his usual impetuosity. The end was grievous as it was sudden, and is briefly described in the preface:

"On the evening of the 3rd of November, 1882, he was seized with paralysis of the right side, accompanied by loss of speech. His mind also had failed, though at intervals his thoughts would return to him. After the first three weeks these lucid intervals became rarer, but it was always very difficult to tell how far his mind was sound or how far astray."

He was moved from the rooms in Suffolk Street, which he had taken as soon as it was decided that he could not live at Harting, and where the doors were besieged with anxiously inquiring visitors, to a quiet house in Welbeck Street, where he died nearly five weeks from the night of his attack.

The wish he had expressed so strongly in his days of health and strength was granted. The power of work was over, and he was taken from the world in which, according to his own view, there could be no longer any joy.

Zéro: A Story of Monte Carlo.

Chapter I.

THE 'DANSE MACABRE.'

The orchestra at Monte Carlo was playing the weird opening of St. Saens' 'Danse Macabre,' when George Warrender entered the theatre.

He had come in by the doorway nearest the stage. The chairs both to his right and left were occupied; and unwilling to disturb the audience, he waited, standing—a noticeable figure against a background at once gorgeous and sombre. A tall man, whose square face, broad about the temples, high at the cheek bones, with a mouth thin, flexible, not especially good-tempered, and deep-set, straight-looking dark eyes, might awaken in the mind of the beholder a variety of speculations, but would certainly create no neutral impression.

An Englishman, though his appearance suggested some faint admixture of foreign blood—Spanish, Mexican, West Indian perhaps—but so slight was the trace that upon familiarity with the countenance it became hardly observable. Evidently not a soldier, in spite of his somewhat military bearing, nor a sporting country gentleman, though his bronzed face testified to the influence of sun and wind. There was upon him the stamp of travel in strange lands—a slight divergence from the prevailing mode in dress, a freedom of gesture, and lightly indicated impatience of conventional restraint, which told of wanderings further afield than Europe.

'La Danse Macabre' is full of trouble, uncertain groping, wild, almost repellent passion. Its burthen is of madness, despair, death; its refrain, a melancholy wail, broken by abrupt chords, fantastic cadences, and weird turns of harmony. At one period the violins send forth a plaintive moan, resembling that of a lost spirit, in vain seeking rest; at another, the melody—dirge-like, mysterious, laden with unutterable woe—thrills the ear; and again changes into a rapid measure, grotesquely horrible, almost Satanic in its presentment of unholy revelry. The music, in its wonderful transitions from the quaintly frolicsome to the pathetic and morbidly terrible, its complex developments and shifting phases of beauty

and deformity, might be likened to the phantasia of life itself. Perhaps no composition is capable of exercising the same subtle influence upon its hearer, more especially in the case of a temperament strung to sensibility, and labouring under conditions of sorrow or mental excitement.

As the forces of Nature insensibly pave the way for physical revolutions, so with ourselves, certain crises in existence, brought about by unrecognised agents, seem preceded by a sense of doubt and expectancy, a feeling of strangeness and awe, which causes the most trifling event to appear momentous, and an accident of conduct or surrounding to be fraught with ominous import.

Thus with Warrender.

He was disappointed, unhappy, at variance with the world and with himself. His melancholy was of the kind which, weary of hugging the diseased offspring of morbid thought, craves for distraction, and longs to throw off its burdens; not the deep-seated sort which absorbs all outward accessories into its inward weight of care. Reaction had set in. He thirsted for the stimulus of an interest against which his finer senses should not rebel. His mood was plastic. A new impression might become now an indelible imprint. Passion, once awakened, could not slumber again. The condition of things favoured the birth of fresh sensation. Is not the very name Monte Carlo like a whiff from some intoxicating draught? Here might be found Nepenthe, acting so subtly that memory, instead of being merged in blank oblivion, evokes visions of the past from which the sting has departed, but which, like the noblest creations of art, are etherealised by a halo of melancholy. At this moment, though the music seemed in a manner to intensify his sadness, it aroused exciting, nay, pleasurable anticipation. He felt himself upon the brink of adventure. Novelty, rebound after deep depression, vague mental tumult, and an odd feeling of personal remoteness, gave subdued charm to the situation.

The dim stage, with its tiny star-like lamps illuminating dark and crabbed score; the bowed figures of the performers; the strange shapes of the instruments, seemed no more real than a picture at which he might have been abstractedly gazing. The almost human crying of the violins and 'cellos sounded like some voice from a far country, making utterance in a language unintelligible to his faculties, yet powerfully affecting the spiritual part of his nature. The sense of bewilderment deepened within him, and confused his vision. The great room incrusted by gilding, with its glittering chandelier and floridly ornamented ceiling; the painted figures of scantily-draped women contrasting with the white uncanny masks sculptured here and there upon

the walls; the cosmopolitan audience, every face of woman, man, and maid thrilling with romantic speculation, telling its own story of sin, sorrow, or mere animal phlegm—the heated atmosphere weighted with patchouli and frangipani; the faint murmur from the vestibule bearing echoes of life—more life, more pain—all combined to strike him with a phantasmagoric effect; so that the scene might have been a vision, and existence a dream, in which the weary heartaching, ever present for weeks past, was lulled or forgotten.

But the moment for drama had arrived. Suddenly his nerves were strung to alertness. His mind became clear of mists. Life was no longer a dream or a spectacle seen through dissolving clouds. A new and vivid consciousness pervaded his being—its cause, the striking profile of a lady, who, seated at the inner end of a row of chairs upon the opposite side of the theatre, drew his eyes as a magnet draws steel.

He straightened himself. His look flashed intelligence. He moved his position till no head intervened between his eyes and the object of their regard.

The lady, lovely, disdainful, self-absorbed, sat perfectly motionless in her corner, her gaze absently fixed upon the orchestra.

"Varuna!" exclaimed Warrender half aloud; then added, as though repenting the involuntary familiarity. "It is Madame Fano."

Though he had never before seen this woman in the flesh, her photograph was well known to him. Madame Fano was the half sister of a young lady whose refusal to become his wife had driven him to Monte Carlo in search of a moral opiate or counter-irritant to pain.

Near Madame Fano were two vacant chairs, one in the line behind, at an angle with her own, by her side another which she retained by covering it with her shawl. Warrender, as soon as the music ceased, crossed over and took possession of the former unappropriated place.

'La Danse Macabre' concluded the first part of the programme, and was followed by the usual rush back to the gaming rooms. Men who had been sitting apparently wrapped in dreamy enjoyment of the music, glanced round keenly, and rose as if awakened to a sense of pressing business. A soft-eyed Italian, who might have been the muse of poetry, hastily gathered up her properties from the seat which she had occupied immediately in front of Warrender, and bustled down the narrow gangway. The sounds from the Casino grew louder as the heavy doors were swung open. Soon the theatre was almost empty; with few exceptions, only

representatives of the respectable British element remaining. Though hardly thus to be characterised, Madame Fano was not lured from her place by the attractions of *roulette* or *trente et quarante*. She maintained her immovable attitude in the corner, though the people sitting next her quitted their places.

Thus it happened that she and Warrender were left in solitary occupation of their respective rows. For several minutes she remained in the same position, and he had ample opportunity for closely studying her features.

For several minutes she remained in the same position, and he had ample opportunity for closely studying her features.

They were clearly cut, of Grecian regularity, but with a sensitiveness in their curves not distinctly Grecian. Nevertheless, statuesque was the term which best characterised the face. In spite of suggested underlying capacity for feeling, and a certain look of past suffering and present resignation, Madame Fano's beauty was cold, and gave rise to a surmise that the most thrilling experiences of womanhood had not hitherto fallen to her portion. Her complexion was pale though the lips were rosy; the brows delicately arched; the hair brown with a reddish lustre. Its smoth coils were surmounted by a small velvet *toque*. She was dressed in black. A tightly-fitting mantle of some rich dark stuff moulded her shapely shoulders. A diamond *agrafe* fastened the lace at her throat. In her bearing, dignity, listlessness and intense inward preoccupation, blended curiously with an expression of restrained eagerness. "Cold, egotistic, passionless," were the epithets which arose at the first glance. "Impulsive, enthusiastic, finely susceptible," said the more prolonged scrutiny.

Her gaze, ere it wandered to the entrance door in search of the companion whom she apparently expected, met that of Warrender for a moment. Assuredly, in the photograph which ornamented Helena Kilsyth's writing table, scant justice had been done to Madame Fano's eyes. But how inadequately, during the course of half-an-hour's conversation, are conveyed the subtleties of an expressive countenance! What an impossibility that they should be rendered in the brief space of time employed upon a sun picture! Here was presented food for a thousand conjectures. Was Madame Fano unhappy, or only yearning for happiness? Had she drunk the dregs of interest, or did she sigh for the draught tantalisingly withheld? Was she indifferent to life, or was it that life seemed to her too momentous to be merged in these surface frivolities? What was the meaning of that dangerous gleam agitating the dark depths; and why did an element of fierceness combine with a softness and dreamy tenderness

which left nothing to be desired in the matter of womanly charm?

The person for whom Madame Fano was waiting had not yet appeared. It seemed to Warrender that the grey orbs were darkened and dilated by inward impatience. He still looked, admired, and wondered. But now Varuna's eyes were removed from the entrance door; and in the withdrawal they again rested upon Warrender's face. This time for longer. Her gaze seemed compelling, and forced his imagination into fresh play. It was deliberate, questioning, yet also at once regal and wistful. It might have been that of a queen, mentally appraising the will and ability of a subject to do her bidding; or it might have been that of a woman in difficulty or distress, who fancied that in a stranger's face she discovered signs of the sympathy and aid she needed. Involuntarily, and as if in answer to her appeal, Warrender made a slight motion forward. Then, for an instant, the faintest blush rose upon Madame Fano's pale cheek. Her lashes drooped; her lips curved in an expression of disdain. She half rose, appeared to hesitate, at last subsided into her corner with eyes steadily averted. Thus for some moments she remained.

Suddenly in an eager undertone, he heard her murmur a single word.

"*Treize.*"

The syllable seemed to fall unconsciously from her lips, and to startle her as though it had been uttered by another person. Was it he himself who had spoken? For a second he doubted, when he saw her turn, and noted the inquiring flash which accompanied the gesture. Her weary indifference had vanished. It was as if she had been awakened from reverie by a voice she knew. Again she repeated low, but clearly,

"*Treize.*"

Now she grew restless. Her hands, which had been lying motionless, fidgeted with the fastening of her cloak. Presently she drew off her glove, and took from an inner pocket one of those cases common at Monte Carlo, made to contain a *rouleau* of gold. She emptied out the coins, carefully counted and replaced them, and for a minute appeared lost in calculation.

People were re-entering the concert-room. The musicians had returned and were arranging their instruments. There was a rustle of silk by Warrender's side; and a lady whom he also recognised from having seen her portrait, swept past him and seated herself in the chair which Madame Fano had been reserving.

Even had he been unaware of any relationship, the likeness between the two would have told him that they were mother and daughter. Their features were almost identical, but Mrs. Kilsyth did not possess that air of dignity and self-restraint which distinguished Madame Fano. Her smile was infantine and uncertain; she had a quick, almost frightened way of changing the direction of her gaze; her dress was careless in spite of its richness; her lips were but half-closed, and belied a certain intensity, which made her eyes remarkable. She was restless in her movements, and neither her countenance nor her limbs appeared ever to be in a state of repose, except when she became, as it were, conscious of something to be guarded against in her demeanour, and compelled her features into an expression of almost unnatural quietude.

She bent excitedly towards Madame Fano, and whispered loudly enough for Warrender to hear the words distinctly:

"They were playing the 'Danse Macabre' a few minutes ago?"

"Yes, mother."

Mrs. Kilsyth sank upon the seat next her daughter and gazed dejectedly into vacancy.

"I came to the door intending to join you," she went on in an agitated voice. "But when I heard *that* music I was obliged to go away again. Do you remember the last time they played it here? De Renzi was the conductor. Cazalette sat yonder. I can see his eyes now as they watched you. There are faces which haunt one, and his could not be forgotten. That was five years ago."

"You are wandering, mother. They have performed that piece many times since!

But *I* have not heard it. I have watched the programmes, and upon such occasions have avoided this part of the Casino. That night the very air seemed heavy with something imminent. It was all madness, fever, tumult! Don't look at me so strangely. The bare recollection of some things excites me. You know what Dr. Frederick Holt said, when he put me in his great chair, and looked me through and through, 'Madam, your temperament is your curse.' Oh, that I were one of those good and happy people who eat, digest, and sleep! Varuna, there is something strange in the moral atmosphere to-day."

"You find it so?" asked Madame Fano, composedly. "You are right. Fate is hovering over us. The music has affected me also. I remember the night you speak of. It was the night but one before—before I gained my freedom."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Kilsyth wildly. "You mustn't talk of

freedom. It's only slaves who speak of freedom. Of course *we* are free. But listen.

"Varuna, I am in despair. Your dream last night was the whisper of a lying prophet. One hundred and twenty times did I stake on 34. The hundred-and-twenty-first, it came up, and my louis was in my hand. Like a flash the inspiration had come, but fatality held my will. I tried the *trente et quarante* room. Fatality again! I was simply playing against the tables. A run of nineteen on black. And the Greek was dealing! Can you account for it? I have never yet known you dream falsely. You have lost me ten thousand francs to-day."

"The day is not yet finished," replied Madame Fano calmly.

"But my purse is empty. I dare not draw again on Bernhardt's. I can play no more unless you will lend me a few napoleons."

"No," said her daughter, sadly yet firmly. "Our bargain must be strictly kept. You are too excitable. If I had once begun to lend you stray napoleons, we should both have been ruined long ago."

"Mrs. Kilsyth held up her hands with a wild, dramatic gesture. "Oh, how cold you are! how calculating! There is in you no warmth, no spontaneity!" she exclaimed in the tone of one who utters lightly-weighed reproaches. "Great Heavens!" she continued rapidly and with gathering excitement. "To think of all that I have sacrificed for you, while you are blind, unconscious as a stone! There's a spell upon me. Just as I was about to stake for the decisive hundred-and-twenty-first time, Lord Bretland came up and spoke to me. The devil was in his tongue. 'Do you know that Cazalette is to be here immediately?' he said. I faltered; the louis fell from my hand—then, '*Rien ne va plus.*' It was the voice of destiny. My chance was gone. Varuna, did you dream of Cazalette last night?"

Madame Fano started. Her face changed perceptibly. "Mother," she whispered in her sweet but incisive tones, "remember that there are people round us who do not understand your strange way of talking. What do you mean? Is Cazalette coming here?"

"Next week. Lord Bretland saw him in Paris. He inquired if we were at Monte Carlo."

Madame Fano looked at the elder lady keenly, inquiringly. "Mother," said she in a whisper, but not so low as to be inaudible to Warrender, who was also able to note the deep sadness of her manner, "it would be the blind leading the blind were I to take you away from Monte Carlo. We are like creatures who can

only inhabit one element. We both want to escape from ourselves. Where can we do that so effectually as here? And just now, I could not live anywhere else." She spoke vehemently, then continued more gently, "It is not for me to tell you that if your nerves are shaken, the fault is partly your own. You should not be afraid of wakeful nights. They are terrible; do I not know that? But not more terrible than the price you pay for drug-bought sleep. In this state of mind and body your brain conjures up phantoms; your dread of Colonel Cazalette is one of them. I have more cause than you to shrink from the past, of which he reminds me. But see, *I* do not flinch. Granted that he has a sort of evil fascination over weak women; let us stand firm and defy him. We will go back to the *roulette* room, mother. Have some faith in me still. You shall see me put my inspiration to the test."

"Is it a number?" asked Mrs. Kilsyth eagerly. "The tables are bewitched. You are safe in trusting the wildest fancy. But I beseech you, Varuna, do not run the risk of staking with your own hand. Have you no lovers here to-day? Where is Alec Fordham? Or there is Wrentzel——"

Varuna's lips curled. "That was a half-hearted adoration. To-day he is the Princess Balzani's shadow."

"Then St. George—surely there was never man more attracted. But for the last few days, Varuna, you have been unlike yourself."

Madame Fano made no reply to this observation. The band was playing a crisp, precise *gavotte*, by Corelli, a passionless piece of harmony, full of quaint *roulades*, delicate *appoggaturas*, and carefully premeditated affections. At its conclusion both ladies left their places; and Warrender, full of curiosity and amazement, followed them to the Roulette Salle.

Chapter II.

numéro treize.

In the second gaming-room the crowd was at its height. The atmosphere was fetid. The heavy ornamentation and Moorish tracery on walls and ceiling seemed dulled with the haze of human breath. For pervading sounds there were the subdued hum of voices, the tramp of feet upon the parquet, the chink of coin, the whirling of the cylinder and rattling of the marble, all melting into a low indefinite roar, broken at intervals by the level calls of the croupiers.

Nowhere than at Monte Carlo does the social sea present a more glassy surface. There is something grotesque and revolting in this outward serenity. It resembles the deadly quietude of a beast lying in wait, or the treacherous smoothnes of a quicksand when it has closed over its prey.

Whatever horrors teem below, the uninitiated observer beholds only stoical indifference or light frivolity—a show in which the performers seem actuated by no more intense purpose than aimless search for amusement, or the thrall of habit which has become boredom. It needs the magnifying glass of a vivified consciousness to show forth the greed, sensuality, unappeasable craving for stimulus to jaded sensation, depravity of spirit, and deep despair, concealed under tense muscles, painted cheeks, and artificial smiles.

All this was but vaguely felt by Warrender: the scene bewildered him, while he was yet sensible of a faint feeling of disappointment. If here life were at high pressure, the tragedy masked itself by an affectation of phlegm. He had not been long enough at Monte Carlo to have become habituated to the strange concentration of interest which compelled this vast assemblage into one narrow groove of occupation too momentous for any outward show of excitement. The scene seemed to him an apt illustration of destiny in its operations upon the tide of human affairs. It affected him somewhat in the same manner as the sight of an Eastern opium den, in which all, drugged into unnatural calm, in respective stages of uneasiness or beatitude, tread an imaginary path leading to a fictitious goal of bliss, and are indifferent to every actuality of life save the poisoned influence of the hour.

Lines three or four deep, of almost every variety of the social creature, pressed thickly round the *roulette* table. The outer rows, English principally, had come over from Nice or Mentone, salving conscience by the pretext of music, and taking pleasure in the reflection that they were now in a position to moralise from personal observation upon the debasing effects of legalised gambling. These were for the most part spectators, except when now and then, a more frisky matron or adventurous miss laid down a five-franc piece upon the even chances, and watched the result with an anxiety and pantomimic show of satisfaction or disappointment, as the coin was raked up or doubled, which contrasted curiously with the imperturbable demeanour of those in the inner circle to whom loss or gain meant perhaps the serious question of existence. Here, brushing garments, were representatives of every type and nationality. A Russian prince flung down his notes royally upon

the colours side by side with a fresh-faced Oxonian, who ruefully beheld one small pile after another swept away from the dozens. An English countess, the patrician calm of her delicate face marred by an expression of unlovely triumph, gathered in her winnings over the shoulders of a be-rouged, bejewelled hag, whose bony fingers were in their turn occupied in a judicious placing of louis upon various numbers. An innocent fair-haired girl, leaning over her husband's chair, touched shoulders with a Parisian *cocotte*. An elderly duchess, florid of face, broad of proportions, looking "business" in a tight-fitting cloth costume, and with a well-stuffed reticule at her belt, imperiously directed the lean, sallow-faced, high-bred looking man who accompanied her, where to lay the notes which she lavishly supplied. Seated before her, the lowest type of sharper—unshorn, unkempt, haggard, and blear-eyed—carefully pricked his card, playing cautiously and pocketing a fair proportion of his gains, while he threw an occasional glance of contempt towards an emaciated, worn-out libertine opposite, whose trembling hands and reckless play indicated the stage of desperation. Here, a member of the so-called Fraternity of St. Vincent de Paul watched his opportunity to pick up and cherish any foundling stake left exposed by the carelessness of its owner. There, a withered crone begged boldly for a five-franc piece wherewith to try her luck for the price of a dinner, and a night's lodging. The lady appealed to, whom Warrender perceived at once to be Mrs. Kilsyth, took out her purse. It contained a single coin. This she placed in the claw-like hand, adding a word of gratuitous advice.

"Try the *première douzaine*. Low numbers are coming up." Then she turned to her daughter and said, in her inconsequent manner, "Poor suffering humanity! Who could refuse to give a wretched woman five francs; but my generosity has robbed me of my only chance of bearding fortune this evening."

Madame Fano was silently and intently watching the game. The withdrawal from the table of a now penniless gambler created a rift in the crowd and brought Warrender to her side. Without moving a muscle, she seemed to become aware of his proximity, and after a moment turned directly upon him that glance of inquiry which had startled him in the theatre. He was certain that she meant to speak to him; and so strongly had she seized upon his thoughts, that the evident intention awakened in him no surprise. For an instant she hesitated; then, in silvery neutral tones, addressed him in French:

"Would Monsieur have the great kindness to place this stake upon *numéro treize?*"

She held towards him a *rouleau* of gold. It was the maximum allowed upon any single number.

Warrender replied in English, with cold politeness: "With pleasure, Madame," and was stretching forth his arm, when Mrs. Kilsyth interposed:

"Not this moment. Let my poor specimen of humanity have her chance. One would not beggar oneself in charity and nullify the gift. There," as the number was proclaimed. "Five. I felt certain she would win. If I had staked that coin myself, fifteen, twenty, or anything else over the dozen would certainly have turned up. Well, there is consolation in the thought that I have done a kindness to one even more unfortunate than myself." She heaved a deep sigh.

"Now," said Madame Fano, pointing towards the table.

Warrender leaned forward and put down the gold as he had been directed. There was a faint murmur among the players, and several pairs of eyes wandered round till they rested upon Madame Fano's face. Warrender observed that three or four altered their stakes. He knew instinctively that Varuna's gaze was fixed, not upon the table, but upon himself. An intense excitement caused his pulses to tingle. The moment had become dramatic. He felt that he was the instrument of fate.

The wheel revolved, the ball rattled into its compartment. "*Rien ne va plus*," was uttered in the croupier's automatic monotone—a moment—"*Treize. Noir. Impair et Manque.*"

Many eyes turned again towards Varuna. She was still looking at Warrender, and stood perfectly quiet, very pale, and with lips tightly pressed together. She did not appear embarrassed by the attention she excited. Three or four of the *habitués* smiled significantly, shrugged their shoulders, and became again absorbed in calculation, while several of those standing, watched her with quickened interest, evidently prepared, should she continue playing, to follow her lead. Her cool venture seem to betoken invincible luck, or an infallible system which placed her above the sport of chance.

Warrender waited while louis and five-franc pieces were being meted variously to the coins scattered upon the cloth. A swift, penetrating suggestion turned him hot. He was ashamed of his agitation—ashamed of the pleasurable triumph with which he placed a little mass of gold and several crisp notes in Madame Fano's hand. He had fancied that a smile at least would reward his success. But to his disappointment, she bestowed upon him no such mark of gratitude. Her eyes did not even meet his, as

in a few formal phrases she expressed her cold thanks. With a stately bow, she moved away, and after a few moments he saw both mother and daughter pass out into the vestibule.

Presumably they had quitted the Casino. Warrender lingered for a short time, not playing, for strangely enough, he felt no inclination to back further his own or Madame Fano's luck. But her shadow lingered near him. The manner in which she influenced his imagination was unaccountable, yet a fact impossible to ignore. The other men and women in the room were no more to him than a crowd of lifeless, painted automatons. She alone seemed of flesh and blood. She alone stimulated his faculties.

Nevertheless, the inward debate which she aroused was by no means to her advantage. Unfamiliar as he was with the type he might be supposed to represent, he had always held the vice of gambling in abhorrence. How much more so when exhibited in the person of a woman—in Helena Kilsyth's sister! Could he imagine Helena herself breathing the corrupt atmosphere which surrounded the *roulette* table? He shuddered at the thought. And yet he had heard her speak of her mother in terms almost of adoration—of her sister with the warmest enthusiasm.

He was obliged to admit that Madame Fano's bearing and style of beauty were at total variance with the life she seemed to be leading. Was it to be supposed that she was a mere slave to her mother's passion for gambling? No. The conversation he had overheard proved that she shared the propensity, and also that both were victims to the most degrading superstition. Had Varuna's augury been based upon a dream of the night before, upon a conjunction of dates, or upon the ticket which had been handed her in lieu of her umbrella? Or—and he remembered the enigmatical look which had been turned upon him—was it possible that he himself was connected with her inspiration, and that some fateful presentiment had prompted the choice of him as her deputy? Her mode of addressing him forbade the supposition that she recognised him from hearsay or description as her sister's friend; and however unconventional might have been her conduct, her haughty dismissal showed plainly that she repented the action, and was aware that it might lay her open to misconstruction.

With his mind still full of these thoughts, he too left the gaming rooms. Upon the steps leading down to the square, he was accosted by a very pretty, very stylishly-dressed, hot-house-flower-like young lady, to whom an old London acquaintance of his own—a good-looking man, elderly, well got up, and blending

in his person the stamps of Bohemianism and fashion—was devoting himself with languid relish.

"Well, Mr. Warrender, and who would have dreamed of seeing you in this naughty place? How long have you been here?"

"About two hours," replied Warrender, returning the greeting, it must be confessed with some doubt as to the identity of his interlocutor. But it was dispelled by her next words.

"When last I heard of you, you were supposed to be excavating buried cities in Peru—oh, Mexico? Thank you, Lord Bretland, I knew that it had something to do with Prescott and Pizarro; but, as you have more than once remarked, we Australians are apt to be a little casual. That is because of the immensity of the country, you know: it affects our ideas. Still, for a barbarian, you must admit that I am teachable."

"For a barbarian, your taste in dress, and your appreciation of the niceties of advanced civilization, are something quite—quite extraordinary," observed Lord Bretland, in his dry halting manner, which gave the impression of a vast fund of thought that it was undesirable to communicate.

The young lady laughed, and met Warrender's look of vague interrogation with a quizzical smile.

"Now, confess that you don't in the least know who I am. I'll give you three guesses at my name, the penalty to be paid in twelve-button gloves, six and a quarter, mind, and Swedish kid"—she held up her slim, daintily cased hands. "In the mean time, while you are cudgelling your memory, we'll take a turn in the Gardens, for even my passion for *roulette* won't enable me to endure the atmosphere of the Casino for more than half-an-hour straight off."

"Does your vanity, Miss Crosbie, allow you to suppose that my memory requires stimulation?" asked Warrender with somewhat forced gallantry. "I have the most vivid recollection of a picnic in Ullagong Scrub, and of the kneading of a damper on a sheet of bark by those very fingers. Upon a former occasion, when I had the pleasure of seeing you, you were haranguing your father's electors upon the advantages they would derive by supporting the Dead Lock system; and the time before that you were good enough to give me lessons in playing the Jew's-harp."

"Oh spare me the shame of all these reminiscences. Civilization has done wonders for me. My husband began my education in Australia. Lord Bretland is continuing it at Monte Carlo. There, you have lost your bet, Mr. Warrender. Did you imagine that I was following the example of your American friends, and travelling round Europe all on my own hook? If you will come

and dine with me this evening at the Hôtel des Anges—and, by-the-way, you'll see a good many angels there, only I'm afraid some of them have fallen from the starry spheres—I'll introduce you to General Featherstone, and to some one much more attractive, if you haven't already made her aquaintance."

"Ah, yes, that I can answer for," said Lord Bretland. "Not half-an-hour ago I saw Warrender lay down the maximum on *numéro treize*, and hand Madame Fano the winnings. You hadn't your eyes about you, Mrs. Featherstone."

Well, if I was blind, some one else used their eyes—and to considerable purpose! I must say that you haven't wasted any time, Mr. Warrender. But I advise you not to be too reckless. Do you know that Madame Fano is called the Vampire. Ghoulish, isn't it? But her uncanniness lies in her conduct rather than in her person, as no doubt you have discovered for yourself."

"I have discovered nothing," replied Warrender—and though he spoke stiffly, there was an inflection of eagerness in his voice, which Mrs. Featherstone was quick to notice—"except that Madame Fano is a very charming-looking lady, whose greatest peculiarity appears to be that of liking to play *roulette* at an inconveniently crowded table, and to whom my long arm was of some slight service this afternoon."

"A peculiarity which a good many people here share," said Mrs. Featherstone. "Come, I don't believe in all this haphazard business. You had better make a clean breast of everything, Mr. Warrender, or confess at once that this is not the first time you have staked for Madame Fano."

"It is perfectly true, Mrs. Featherstone, that I have never seen Madame Fano before to-day," said Warrender coldly.

"By-the-way," interrupted Lord Bretland. "Surely you were with the Kilsyths' party at the Hallingford Ball this spring. You must have been as horrified as I was, to hear of poor old Sir John's death."

"Sir John Kilsyth dead!" echoed Warrender, pausing suddenly, his face pale and disturbed. "What do you mean? I have heard nothing of it. You know that I left England three months ago—rather more, I believe. I have been in the back woods of America out of reach of newspapers."

"Then, where have you turned up from now?"

"From Paris; I was one night in England. Tell me when did this happen, and how."

"His horse rolled over him in the hunting-field, the first run of the season, two months ago. Poor old Sir John! A bit of a Puritan, and not equal to marching with the times—but what a splendid

old fellow he was! It is a sad thing for his niece, though I am told that she always resented not having been placed under her mother's guardianship. Mrs. Kilsyth has her turn now. Well, I hope that Miss Helena will not develop the family mania."

Warrender was silent. A rush of painful thought and bitter recollections effaced the vivid impressions of the last few hours. Once more his mind was filled with the image of Helena Kilsyth. Serene, pure, majestic, to associate her with these surroundings seemed profanation. Her name choked him. What right had he to show any anxiety? He was too proud, too self-conscious to ask questions which might betray the wound she had inflicted. He turned abruptly to Mrs. Featherstone—

"You were speaking of Madame Fano?"

"Perhaps I had better profit by that little hint, and discreetly hold my tongue, since you appear to be on terms of intimacy with her sister. Lord Bretland, your diplomacy has been rather thrown away. Mr. Warrender and I are old friends, and don't need to stand on ceremony with each other. What is the mystery? Is he going to marry Miss Kilsyth, or was his great-aunt a distant cousin of Monsieur Fano's grandmother? By-the-way, I hear that Colonel Cazalette is to appear in the scene shortly; I mean to ask him how Madame Fano disposed of a troublesome encumbrance. I am convinced that he is in all Mrs. Kilsyth's secrets, for the old lady becomes more mad in manner than is even her wont whenever his name is mentioned. I am not at all satisfied that Monsieur Fano himself mixed his night draught. An overdose of morphia is such an easy way of accounting for sudden death."

Lord Bretland laughed a little awkwardly.

"Ah, ye-es—do you think so?" he said in his negatively-interrogative fashion. "It would take a great deal to kill Mrs. Kilsyth. I've seen her swallow half a bottle of laudanum straight off—fact, I assure you. She is a little queer at times. I have always accounted for it in that way."

Mrs. Featherstone looked steadily at Warrender with her audacious blue eyes.

"You see, I haven't spent two winters at Monte Carlo for nothing. That's the worst of this place; it upsets all one's nice notions about human nature. No one is mildly wicked here."

"Is it insinuated that poor Madame Fano poisoned her husband?" asked Warrender. "The biography of this lady promises to be interesting. Pray continue, Mrs. Featherstone. My acquaintance with Miss Kilsyth does not entitle me to become the champion of her family."

"Well, let us sit down," said Mrs. Featherstone, placing herself upon a bench, and indicating by a slight motion of her arm that there was room for Warrender at her side. "Did you ever see such a glorious evening? The colouring of the water reminds me of Sydney Harbour, and I declare, these lank, sickly gum-trees make me feel quite sentimental."

Chapter III.

EXPLANATORY CONVERSATION.

Never had the small principality presented a more fascinating aspect. The sun was sinking behind the glittering domes and spires of the Casino. The tiny peninsula lay sleeping on the sea's bosom; and far to the south that mystic Mediterranean, scarcely touched by a horizon line, blended almost imperceptibly with the sky. Higher, lay a golden lake dotted with soft islets of purple; and higher still, dark, billowy masses of cloud crested by foamy splashes. On the east, a faint, flame-like glow spread over land and water, shrouding the hills above Mentone in a rosy haze. The nearer heights of Mont Agel, and Mont Bataille rose, seamed and barren, above the olive woods at their base, making a sombre background to gaily ornamented villas and semi-tropical gardens; while just below their summits the white Cornice road wound in zig-zag fashion towards Roquebrune, a sun-illuminated patch which seemed to have slipped down from the rocks above.

"Madame Fano is as much a feature of Monaco as the Tête de Chien or the palace of the Grimaldis," continued the pretty Australian. "Yonder villa, pointing to a fanciful minareted building embowered in olives and palms, which from where they sat was visible to the left of the gardens, "belongs to Mrs. Kilsyth; but at the present time it is being redrained or redecorated, so that the two ladies are among the angels at our hotel. As they are a source of profit to the landlord, and of entertainment to the inmates, no one is particularly anxious that the villa should be in a state for occupation."

"Has Mrs. Kilsyth been long a widow? asked Warrender absently. "Who was she?"

"Oh, if it is a question of genealogy, you must go to Lord Bretland. My acquaintance with Debrett and Burke is still in an elementary stage. Lord Bretland, who was Mrs. Kilsyth?"

"She was—a widow," slowly returned Lord Bretland.

"So we naturally conclude. But widows are not brought into the world ready made. Who was Madame Fano's father?"

"He was, according to tradition, an Eastern scholar. His

origin is shrouded in obscurity; but it has been said that he belonged to the tribe of Israel. He wrote a book about the Vedic Mythology, and died before he had had the happiness of beholding the infant face of Madame Fano, whom, in tribute to his memory, his disconsolate widow named after the Vedic god Varuna, not taking into account the consideration of sex."

"Very clearly stated," said Mrs. Featherstone. "Anyhow, it is a satisfaction to feel that one's mind is being improved. I wasn't acquainted with the gentleman called Varuna. The Vedic gods ain't much known in the bush. Go on, Lord Bretland; Mrs. Kilsyth's biography ought to be worth hearing."

"Yes, I think so, especially if from her own lips. Mrs. Kilsyth is so candid, and so communicative about most things, not everything—her antecedents, for instance. I've heard it said that she is of South American origin, and I have been told that her father is in a madhouse. I can give a bold outline of her story, and that is all, Mrs. Featherstone. The interesting widow of the Eastern savant devoted herself to the education of her daughter, and to the investigation of systems at Homburg and Baden—systems for discovering the secrets of numbers. She wasn't always successful. The air of a Kursaal is unhealthy. Miss Varuna fell ill; had to be taken to the Engadine, where, alas! were no gaming-houses. But we are told that for a short time love may be as potent a source of excitement as gambling; and Passion, Superstition, and Hysteria form three sides of a moral triangle. Reginald Kilsyth was at the hotel at Ponte Resina. You, Warrender, at any rate, know something about the Kilsyth history."

"Pray remember that *I* only came over from Australia two years ago," interjected Mrs. Featherstone.

Lord Bretland turned towards her. "Its peculiarity is that there are in the family two properties and two religions. Marelands goes with the title. That branch has been Protestant, I might almost say Puritan, since the days of Cromwell. Hallingford Abbey descended for generations in a younger and Roman Catholic branch, till, failing other heirs, estates and religions were joined in the person of old Sir William, the father of the late baronet and of the Reginald we are talking of. He would have been glad enough to do away with distinctions of faith, but, oddly enough, Regie became imbued with the traditions of the place, turned pervert of his own accord, and, when he inherited the Abbey, was as rabid a Roman Catholic as you could find in Rome—or in England, which is saying more. There was even a talk of his joining the priesthood. However, our fascinating friend settled that. The dear widow became suddenly inspired with an enthusiasm for romance

and religion. She sighed for the innocent and domestic joys of life. She sighed for spiritual consolations. For some time the gaming-rooms knew her not. She turned Catholic also, or might have been so before, for all I know, and Kilsyth married her."

Lord Bretland paused under the somewhat embarrassing consciousness that he was speaking energetically, and had allowed himself to become dramatic. His fishy eyes shot a gleam of animation upon his listeners. Both appeared profoundly interested. Mrs. Featherstone gave a little eager nod, and smiled quizzically.

"That must have been a long time ago?"

Lord Bretland shook his head mournfully. "Ye-es; ah, Mrs. Featherstone, you have entrapped me into a confession of my age. Eighteen years ago I was a young man, and I also was staying at the hotel at Ponte Resina."

"Well," said Mrs. Featherstone decidedly, "I am not at all surprised that your friend did not become a priest. Setting aside her beauty,—and I'm pretty sure that must have been considerable, if at five-and-twenty Mrs. Kilsyth was as talkative, as inconsequent, and as amusing as I find her at fifty—she must have been simply irresistible."

"At all events," continued Lord Bretland, "Regie Kilsyth never quite fell out of love with his wife, though he very soon became aware of her absolute unreliableness. It was quite pretty to hear him making excuses for her eccentricities. He got into the way of treating her as a spoiled child, and of considering her as little accountable for her actions. On the whole, he resigned himself to the inevitable with a fairly good grace, and was rather amused by her vagaries. Mental equilibrium isn't the least necessary to make a woman beloved. The more kaleidoscopic she is, the greater her charm. It's wonderful what a trick of manner will do!"

"I quite agree with you," retorted Mrs. Featherstone, "when one sees the sort of women who make the greatest fools of men."

"Well, to return to poor Mrs. Kilsyth; English life did not suit her excitable temperament. A course of waters at Homburg every year became perfectly necessary for her health. The confessional lost its attraction. Out of sheer perversity she apostatised, and took a plunge into atheism by way of variety."

"But I will say," interrupted the Australian lady, "that Mrs. Kilsyth is quite a fervent Catholic. She does not play in Passion Week; and I never saw any one look a greater picture of misery."

"Mrs. Kilsyth has passed through many phases of spiritual experience. Religion is Colonel Cazalette's foible, and it was he

who, a good deal later, brought her back to the bosom of the Church. But Kilsyth felt her falling away deeply. Folly, even the milder forms of vice, he could pardon readily, but not disrespect to his creed. This, his will, made about that very time, proved. At his death, which happened some ten years after the marriage, it was found that he had left the whole of his property to Helena on the condition that she was brought up a strict Roman Catholic, and had appointed his brother her guardian. Mrs. Kilsyth's natural rights were barely recognised, and only in the event of Sir John dying *after* Miss Helena had attained the age of eighteen, would she be permitted to live with her mother, while Mrs. Kilsyth's jointure was so tied up in the hands of trustees, that the heirs of Monsieur Blanc have happily only reaped the benefit of her yearly income."

"And, Madame Fano?" asked Warrender.

"Varuna, who during these years had resided under her stepfather's roof, was naturally not mentioned in his will. She and Mrs. Kilsyth left England together. Dear old Sir John hated his sister-in-law as much as it was in his nature to hate any woman, and was rejoiced to be quit of her. You can imagine the scenes. The little girl, Helena, clinging with tears and entreaties to her mother, who had always a most extraordinary fascination for this child of another breed; Varuna, cold and disdainful; Mrs. Kilsyth frantic, tearing her passions to tatters, a tigress robbed of her young. Poor lady! if her emotions are undisciplined and evanescent they are certainly genuine—for a short time at least."

"Lord Bretland," interrupted Mrs. Featherstone, "are you a victim to Mrs. Kilsyth's elderly charms, that you insist upon analysing her virtues and peculiarities so exhaustively? Don't you see it is the daughter in whom Mr. Warrender feels so deep an interest?"

"Varuna Fano's story is a tragedy of Monte Carlo," said Lord Bretland gravely. "Mother and daughter took up their abode here, and fell in with a queer set. At seventeen Varuna was married in Nice to a good-looking, coarse, dissipated *brute*, for whose conduct there was but one excuse, a depraved appetite for opium. He was found one morning dead from an overdose of morphia; and the kindest action which he ever performed towards his wretched wife was when he left her a widow, penniless, and burdened with an idiot child. The suicide was never very clearly proved, but Fano had been losing heavily, and the administration did all they could to hush up the affair."

Lord Bretland ceased speaking. There was a pause. Warrender

made no comment upon the strange history that he had heard, but biting the end of his moustache gazed vacantly seaward. Presently, Lord Bretland, all dramatic intonation gone from his voice, listlessly remarked that they were transgressing the canons of the Riviera in lingering after the sunset chill; and Mrs. Featherstone rose with a clinking of her bangles and a rustle of her satin skirts.

"Come, Mr. Warrender, you are going to dine with us, and be introduced to my husband. I can't promise you a place beside the enchantress; but I'll invite you to meet her in our salon at 11.30 to drink punch and to see the new year in. Where are you going to stay?"

"I believe that my luggage has been sent to the Hôtel des Anges," answered Warrender.

Mrs. Featherstone professed unbounded pleasure at this information, and proceeded to descant upon the excellence of the *cuisine*. As they crossed towards the square a little group approached, consisting of a lady, lean, well dressed, of the bird-like aristocratic style of feature, presenting in her person the embodied essence of British Philistinism; a stout, red-faced, cheery-looking German gentleman; and a sallow, melancholy-visaged middle-aged man, in whose appearance were curiously combined the military air with that of the dilettante, and who gave the impression of making a continual effort to reconcile himself with uncongenial circumstances.

"That is my husband," whispered the pretty Australian. "Now, how shall I classify him? There's a certain type of man one meets everywhere," she continued, as gravely as though she were giving a lecture. "He is a 'fellow.' All his male friends are 'fellows.' They are not particularly clever, or artistic, or anything else; they're simply good fellows. Well, that is exactly what my husband is *not*. I don't mean to say that he is artistic—in the way of pictures and china, or of the æsthetic tribe. Music is his forte. He is trying to compose an opera, and when he is not wrapped up in harmonies, he is really decidedly entertaining. I must say," she added, with her charming air of simplicity, "that I prefer a man in his maturity. That is, because I am so young. Do you think that I shall *ever* be old enough to love a boy? The lady walking with him is one of the people at our hotel. How much soap and hot water do you think would be required to take the starch out of her? Mrs. Livingstone, let me introduce Mr. Warrender. Mr. Braunstein, have you given Jules proper instructions about the punch for our orgie this evening? My husband, General Featherstone—Mr. Warrender."

In the confusion of introductions that took place the party divided, and Warrender found himself walking beside Lord Bretland.

"It does not say much for the natural resources of civilized beings, when one's brain can be stimulated by the bald nonsense that is talked in a place like this," remarked Lord Bretland, who, after his fashion, was something of a philosopher. "Here have I been for the last two months studying the world compressed into the space of a few square yards. Certainly I have the advantage of being able to retire into my villa—where, by-the-way, you must come and breakfast with me to-morrow—when the spectacle becomes too painful; but there is no doubt that the sight of all the frivolity, exaggeration, hardened vice, meretriciousness, goads to sated senses, which are displayed at Monte Carlo, is a liberal education. We live our satires now-a-days, instead of writing them. One gets a bird's-eye view of the whole social system here, and the absence of dividing fences brings about a wideness of sympathy that may or may not be beneficial, but is at least enlightening. You know the story of the Duchess of —, who, when one of the croupiers refused to cash her cheque, imperiously asserted her rank. 'Madam,' said he with a bow, 'all ladies are duchesses here!'"

Warrender made an impatient gesture.

"The place may amuse you," he said; "to me it is absolutely sickening. There is no stronger instance of the bad effect it may have upon people born for nobler things than the story you were telling a little while ago."

"Poor Madame Fano! You must not judge of her entirely by what you hear. It is my opinion that her unhappy marriage has petrified her very soul. That woman possesses, I am convinced, the strongest capacity for devotion—all expended in this vile passion for gambling. They call her the 'Vampire,' but not for the reason you may perhaps suppose. I don't believe that she has ever in her life unbent to any man. She is cold and inaccessible as the Edelweiss."

"Yet why—why?" began Warrender eagerly, and paused.

"Why do men follow her like a pack of fools, and throw themselves down precipices in despair at her coldness? Because the attentions of a certain royal personage first of all made her the fashion. Because her iciness piques curiosity and excites ardour; and because she has a superstitious fancy that it is impossible for her to win at play unless her money is staked by a man who loves her. Don't you see the connection of ideas? It is like that weird fairy tale in which a magician rules the princess, and,

under penalty of death, propounds riddles to her suitors. The lady's pleasure-garden rattles with human skeletons; she herself is cold, weary, wretched. She is under a spell, from which but one can release her. So with Varuna. Teach her to love, and the evil enchantment will be broken."

"You are still half a poet, Bretland."

"No—only an observer: but I am poetic enough to cherish the belief that, for a woman, the one potent god of the universe is Love. I have my theories about Varuna. She is not what she seems. That woman is the victim of some secret dread, not of any definite enemy, but of imprisoned forces within her own nature. Some day they will burst their bonds, and she will be changed. Here we are at my diggings; will you come in and have a sherry and bitters before the *table d'hôte*. You will find it amusing at the Des Anges. I often go there myself, but to-night I have an engagement. We shall meet later at the Casino."

Warrender declined the invitation. Instead of proceeding to the hotel, however, he turned again into the garden, and, seating himself upon a bench facing the sea, gave himself up to reverie.

Chapter IV.

THE HÔTEL DES ANGES.

Dinner had commenced when Warrender entered the *salle à manger* at the Hôtel des Anges, and made his way to where General Featherstone and his wife were sitting, and where a place had been kept vacant for him.

A *table d'hôte* at Monaco presents a still more remarkable variety of the human species than is to be seen in any other of the Riviera watering-places. Food for speculation and interest was here not wanting. Warrender's eyes sought Madame Fano but found her not, though the sight of two unappropriated chairs near the head of the table kept him in a state of expectation till the meal was concluded.

The scene was one of glitter, gas, and noise, inspiring sadness as well as amusement. Involuntarily, Warrender thought of Browning's lines:

> "....till in due time, one by one,
> Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
> Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun."

Opposite him was an English girl, with sad, prominent eyes, thin cheeks, and bright hectic flush, so unconscious, and yet so

unmistakably doomed. Beside her, a fair American, with that look of softness, brilliance, and artificiality, so characteristic of her nation as represented by her sex. She wore a fantastic arrangement of crimson plush upon her shoulders, and priceless diamonds at her neck, in her ears, and on her round white wrists. Lower down, a woman in a black dress, cut after the pattern of Regent Street, with a bunch of tea-roses at her throat. Her deep-set eyes, bistre-shaded, the melancholy expression of her rather coarsely cut lips, her free false laugh, as she made herself agreeable to the elderly, *roué*-like gentleman who filled her glass with champagne, told their own sorrowful story, and renewed in Warrender the sense of pity and repulsion.

He turned with faint relief to another of these living vignettes—a portly man with a large white collar, and a magnificent chain meandering over an ample expanse of waistcoat, sitting upon the other side of the consumptive English girl. His white hair, beard, and whiskers stood out like a nimbus from his red fleshy face and bald *crâne*. He had a look of "got up" honesty, of leering frankness and assumed suavity, inexpressibly disagreeable. But, at least, he was not a woman!

"These dear little birds, these innocent little birds," he was saying in unctuous tones. "It goes to my heart to eat them. Cruelty to animal creation! The martyrdom of Nature! In my youth I lived, from principle, upon water biscuits and farinaceous food. But who acts up to conviction at Monte Carlo? When I find an honest man here I regard him as a gem, a phenomenon. As for the ladies!" He shrugged his shoulders expressively. "Now, sir," addressing a flashy, bejewelled Englishman of the "'Arry" type. "You are a gentleman of varied observation. What is your opinion of the relative tendency towards gambling of the two sexes?"

"Oh, I back the ladies." And "'Arry" leered unpleasantly in the direction of the American, who returned the glance with a cold stare. "I mean it as a compliment. They gamble with themselves. Now, marriage, you know—isn't a woman staking her life?"

"Ah," chuckled the fat gentleman, "it's said that marriages are made in heaven. But you can't insure against Zéro coming up sometimes. Zéro is the devil's chance. *Garçon, portez l'autre chose.* I say, bring it back. What's the Greek—I mean the French—for sparrows? I never exercise my brain when I'm eating: it's bad for the digestion; that is one argument for marriage. One might make one's wife do all the hard work."

"A convenient combination of matter and mind," observed "'Arry."

The white-haired gentleman leaned forward and spoke to Warrender in German.

"I am English," coldly replied the latter.

"Ah, pardon me. The conformation of your head, the great width at the base of the forehead, a sign, by-the-way, of superior intellect, suggests the German origin. You have not been long at Monte Carlo, the place is hardly full yet. Next week, there will be another table, and you will see people eight deep pitching money over each other's heads. Are you interested in *roulette*, sir? I myself have had thirty years' experience of gaming-tables and have worked out a system. It's a wonderful game. Chess is a child to it, the mystery of the number nine has never been satisfactorily explored. I have devoted my life to its study. I got as far as being able to tell the winning number seven times running, when I said to myself, 'You can go no further.' But a friend of mine has gone further. He is a Pole. The secret lies in the mystery of the nines. We shall work it together, and we shall share the profits, of course we *could* break the bank, and clean the whole thing out. But we ain't such fools as that. We shall content ourselves with making our £20,000 a year. It's nothing but a question of system, my dear sir. People who lose are those who play recklessly. The dear wife says, 'Oh, I think *rouge* will turn up.' The husband stakes, and his louis are swept away, whereas if he had calculated his chances, he would have gone on *noir*."

"D-d-don't listen to him," confidentially stuttered a little red-whiskered man upon Warrender's right. "He's a s-s-swindler. Says he'll sell his s-s-system for five hundred francs. You must look out here, or you'll be cheated. D-d-don't you dine in the restaurant. You'll be charged t-t-two francs for a mutton-chop. My name is Bland, C-C-captain Bland. I'm with a party. Let us go the Casino together. Let us all go in a b-b-body. Do you get tired of travelling? I do, you know. I've got C-c-cook's tickets, you know. People say they aren't a saving; but just you c-c-calculate the number of miles and the fares, and you'll see. I'm just stopping here to look at the g-g-ambling. *Roulette* is too scientific. *Trente et quarante*—that's the thing, you know. There's a lady here—she lives with a c-c-count, and she plays all day. At night she is generally a little squiffy; but when she is squiffy, she always wins. You follow her lead, and you'll win too."

Captain Bland beamed with benevolent smiles under the happy conviction that he had armed a helpless fellow-traveller against

the assaults of a set of thieves; and turning to his party, whom Warrender perceived to be Americans, repeated emphatically, "Let us go in a b-b-body. They can't do us much harm if we go in a b-b-body."

"We are unfortunately placed this evening," remarked General Featherstone with apologetic stiffness. "The people in the hotel usually sit at the other table; but we have been spending a few days at San Remo, and came back to find our seats occupied. I wanted to dine quietly in our salon, but my wife likes variety, and, I really believe, prefers this set to the other."

Mrs. Featherstone, leaning across her husband, had a good deal to say upon the subject. Presently the meal came to an end, and a move was made to the reading-room. Three-quarters of an hour later, just as Mrs. Featherstone had begun to adjust her wraps, the door of the reading-room opened, and Mrs. Kilsyth and Madame Fano entered. The former looked flushed and agitated, but strikingly handsome, with a scarf of black lace becomingly shrouding her silvery hair. Madame Fano wore her bonnet, and carried a mantle of crimson plush upon her arm. She approached Mrs. Featherstone. "May I walk with you to the Casino? My mother is not going down." A chorus of exclamations greeted the announcement.

"It is true," said Mrs. Kilsyth in a tone of dejection. "I am cleaned out. Happily the new year begins to-morrow. My luck is gone. The fount is dried up: silver has no effect; a louis is useless; it requires dirty crumpled notes to set the stream running; and, alas! there are none forthcoming. I am going to stay here and play whist. Mr. Braunstein will be my partner. We shall play for that excellent thing which you cannot see, but which you can feel, which is without value to some, of inestimable worth to others—thrown into a gutter, and sold for the jewels of Golconda. They call it love."

Warrender was standing in the background. Mrs. Featherstone motioned him by a look to her side, ere she addressed Madame Fano.

"We shall be delighted to take care of you. But may I introduce to you a friend of mine, and a friend, too, if I mistake not, of your sister? Mr. Warrender, Madame Fano."

Varuna bowed. Then, her eyes meeting those of Warrender, shot a startled gleam, and the colour rose vividly to her cheek. She held out her hand.

"Of course, Mr. Warrender, your name is familiar to me. I am very glad to make your acquaintance. I did not know who you were this afternoon. You brought me luck: and I have not properly expressed my gratitude."

"On the contrary, I was fortunate in merely enabling you to profit by a happy inspiration. But you did not continue playing?"

"The tables were too crowded. And I have my own code of signals which tell me when to go on and when to stop. Thirteen is not usually a favourable number to me."

"You are superstitious then, madame?"

"No, not in the common acceptation of the word. But I believe that the unseen universe, like the physical, is governed by fixed laws, only it requires a sixth sense to recognise them."

"You consider that the changes of *roulette* are regulated by the Higher Powers?"

Madame Fano slightly elevated her eyebrows. "Ah! you speak ironically. What are the Higher Powers? We don't know. But we know there are systems and laws."

"Well," said Mrs. Featherstone, "my husband will certainly not exercise his musical sense with any satisfaction this evening unless we start off at once. He is particularly anxious to hear Borghini play his solo on the violoncello in the first part of the programme."

The night was clear and balmy—here in the dimness of road and shrubbery, full of tender shadows and soft whisperings of leaves and insects. The air kissed wooingly, and was laden with a strange fragrance, such as might be exhaled by some deep-hearted exotic flower. It was a night that stirred the soul to sweet, fantastic tumult, and in which the pulses throbbed in yearning, half spiritual, half earthly.

Now the party emerged from a shady belt of garden into the great *place*. At one end rose the Casino, its domed roof outlined against a moonlit sky, with carriages passing to and fro before the portico, and misty figures ascending and descending the broad flight of steps. Innumerable gas lamps shone like stars in the shadowy space, illuminating dusky parterre, marble balustrades, and fountains in play, while here and there, deepening the surrounding obscurity, the ghastly rays of an electric globe imparted a touch of unearthliness to the scene. Stillness and wild solitude blended curiously with the fret and fever of human life. The grim heights, majestic and time-worn, which towered in the background, looked sullen sentinels of this pleasure-ground of vice and frivolity. Nature, serene and chaste, seemed to rebuke silently the meretricious devices of Art. Far to the south stretched the sea, pallid and moon-tipped; and in the foreground, relieved by the white gleam of marble terraces, rose dull groves of eucalyptus and mimosa, and clumps of feathery palms.

TEMPLE BAR.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY."

FEBRUARY 1884.

Peril.

By JESSIE FOTHERGILL.

Author of 'The First Violin,' 'Kith and Kin,' etc.

PART I.

AT 61, GREAT NORTH STREET.

Chapter IV.

A VAGABOND'S STORY.

WHILE Peril was absent Paul leaned forwards, and drew figures in the gravel with her umbrella, which she had left in his charge. He wished sincerely that she did not interest him so much. He had not got to the stage of being indifferent to anything, so long as he could be near her; but he had got to that point at which she haunted him with a persistency which was almost irritating, just because he was not reckless. He would rather have been able to shake himself free from her influence; he had sense enough to be perfectly aware that to think of her much, or let her get any kind of power over him, sentimental or other, meant ruin for his peace of mind, and that so far as thinking of approaching her nearer, as a possible lover, went—so far as that was concerned, he and the man who was weeding the walk a few paces off, were practically on an equality. He might be her equal in manners, and her superior in mind; he might be in every respect suited to guide, and help, and command her; but what did such things, such qualities, matter to people of the Nowell calibre, belonging to the Nowell clan? Nothing, and less than nothing. The red-haired youth with the two cotton factories would have been considered an eligible, perhaps a brilliant *parti;*

if Paul Lawford came forward with such a proposal, it would be considered that he displayed presumption amounting to insolence. So he told himself, in the little parley that he held with himself while she was absent, and felt a little bitter. The bitterness brought him to himself, like a tonic; and he reminded himself that he was not required by any law or rule, to play knight-errant to this distressed damozel. Indeed, the probability was, that the knight who, when the lists were thrown open, would come a-tilting with her colours pinned to his helm would be her cousin Hugh. She had betrayed, it might be unconsciously, but at any rate unmistakably, what her feelings were; it would be something little short of a miracle, argued Lawford, if they were unreturned if an ardent, generous, impulsive lad like Hugh Nowell had lived under the same roof with this girl for four years or more, and been fastened to her by the close bond of a friendship in which he was her champion and protector, and had not fallen in love with her. It would be incredible, and almost monstrous. The only argument he could think of, against the absolute certainty of such a thing was, that it seemed to settle things almost too easily and smoothly; more easily, more sanely, and reasonably than, as a rule, complicated family disagreements were settled. And yet—she was so young, and had struggled against the burden of so great a trouble, so much lovelessness—it seemed fit and right, and probable too, that her unhappiness should at last be ended in this good and natural manner; that she should find her rest and her happiness in his arms who had been her friend and defender throughout these dreary years.

But Nowell? This was where, to Lawford's mind, the puzzle came in. What did his complete and unaccountable silence on the subject of his cousin mean? If it had been his own case, Paul could very well have understood it; he would not have cared to mention a person whose love and whose troubles were so sacred, as, in such a case, hers would have been. Perhaps the fact was, that Nowell was resolved to say nothing till after his grandfather's death, or until he had received some share in the business, which would enable him to carry things in his own way. That would account for it all, Lawford thought, with a feeling of satisfaction at having found so reasonable a solution to the puzzle, which was as strong as if it had been some matter personal and concerning himself. It was quickly followed by the other, and less satisfactory thought:

"It would explain the puzzle, but it would not be in the least like Hugh Nowell as I know him."

He felt vexed when he was forced to come to this conclusion;

he felt a great desire, the strength of which surprised even himself, to know that something was going to be done, or actually had been done, to make Peril happy instead of wretched; to put some sweetness into her life, instead of all that acrid bitterness and discontent. He felt as if he knew very well what she looked like under adverse circumstances; he had a strong wish to see her in sunshine as well as under these lowering clouds. Perhaps it was reserved for Hugh Nowell to work this change. Was he really the right man to do it?

Pondering thus, he was roused by her voice close beside him.

"I'm here, back again. Have I been long?"

"No, I don't fancy so. In any case, you commanded my attendance, and I can have nothing better to do than wait your convenience."

"I wonder if you mean to snub me with that," she said, sitting down beside him. "I should not wonder if I have laid myself open to a snub. I expect Hugh would say I had been talking in a most wild and improper manner. I know I feel a great deal better for it, and I am much obliged to you for listening to me."

"Don't mention it," he conjured her politely.

"Mr. Lawford," she said, and there was the grace of a slight hesitation in her manner and tone, which seemed scarcely to belong to the same girl as the one who had been pouring out her wrongs to him all the way hither, "don't think me very impertinent; I don't mean to be, really. I don't know any proper manners. I want to ask you something."

"Anything I can tell you——"

"No; don't say that. Perhaps you may not want to tell me. I shall quite understand if you say you won't."

"You rouse my curiosity."

"Well—please—what are you?"

"What am I?" he echoed, startled and ashamed of himself for feeling momentarily ashamed of his poor condition; "a vagabond, with no ostensible means of livelihood."

"Hugh doesn't have vagabonds for his friends—and he thinks all the world of you."

"Much obliged to him, I am sure," said Lawford sarcastically. "That must put a sort of *cachet* upon me, for the relief of doubtful inquirers; but all the same, I am what I said—a vagabond."

"How did you come to be a vagabond?"

"I never 'came to be' one. The case is much more flagrant than you suppose, for I was born one. I am, as you might say, a vagabond by the grace of God."

"You are saying that to show me that I must not ask any more, so I won't. You will forgive me if I was impertinent?"

"There was nothing impertinent in it," he said, steadily avoiding looking at her, and still tracing complicated figures in the gravel. And then, suddenly remembering a remark of Mrs. Magson's, which had been lying dormant in his recollection ever since it was made, he said: "Miss Nowell, did you ever hear of a place called Wiswell?"

"Wiswell!" Her whole face became transfigured, and her eyes blazed upon him. "My mother came from Wiswell. What do you know of it?"

"Scarcely anything; I have been there once in my life, and all my people spring from there—that's all."

"Oh, I imagined for one wild moment that you might have even—seen her," she said, in a low and awestruck voice.

Lawford was profoundly touched by this bright trait gleaming out of the darkness, as it were—this reverence and love for the very name of the mother whom she had never seen; whose love, could she have known it, might have made of her something very different from what she was.

"I often think of Wiswell, and wonder what it is like," she went on. "My mother's name was Wistar."

"Ah! there is a Mr. Wistar, a farmer, who lives at a queer old house called Stanesacre."

"That is it—yes. That is my mother's brother; my uncle. He came in for part of the insults that were heaped by Mr. Nowell upon the whole family when his son married my mother Stanesacre—it sounds bleak and barren, but I often wish to see it My uncle Wistar has never taken any notice of me—it was not likely. Did you ever see him? What is he like?"

"I don't know that I ever saw him. He is an old bachelor, I heard; as comfortable and substantial in his 'stony acre,' as we were the reverse in our damp old Grange."

"But, Mr. Lawford, do tell me—tell me about yourself!" she implored him, her interest really roused at last; she viewed him no more as a vessel into which she could pour the story of her wrongs, but as an individual who could, if he would, tell her something about himself that should interest her.

"I fear I can tell you very little about myself that would be of the least interest to you," he said slowly, feeling, to tell the truth, not much inclined to comply with her demand, or to lay bare to one so self-absorbed the story of his trials and his poverty, just in order to afford a few moments' gratification to a temporary, indifferent curiosity.

But Peril was persistent—he could have prophesied that—and gentle, which he would hardly have anticipated.

"Were you born at Wiswell Grange?" she asked. "I like the sound of it."

"No; I was born in a very prosaic house of a prosaic London suburb. My father was the younger brother; his elder inherited the old Grange, though it is mine now."

"Yours now! oh, don't tantalise me, Mr. Lawford. How does it come to be yours? If you knew the interest I take in everything belonging to Wiswell!"

"It came to be mine quite in the natural and proper way—through my uncle's death. He was anything but a vagabond, allow me to tell you."

"I wish you would tell me what you mean by being a vagabond. I always think vagabonds are people who beg."

"Those are not only vagabonds, but rogues. I never got quite so low—or so high—since I am a vagabond, and begging is, as it were, the acme of vagabondism; anyhow, I never got so far as that," he said; and then, finding that she did not seem at all scared by the "vagabond" bogey, he plunged suddenly into an account of himself, thinking that her reception of it would at least give him another glimpse into her character—would reveal whether her proud and lofty bearing covered any of the pettifogging Nowell spirit, or whether she saw through the husk of things to the realities—the "verities."

"Poverty was what made us vagabonds," he said. "My father, as soon as ever he was earning enough to keep himself as an accountant in London—for you must understand that Wiswell Grange was only a humble little place, not the house of a 'great family' in any sense of the word—when my father was just keeping his own head above water, he persuaded my mother to join him, and they got married, and had two children—my sister Katty and me; and they struggled on, very uncomfortably, and yet, according to my recollection, very happily. I've no doubt it is very immoral, and quite unlike the sort of people who constitute England's greatness and all that sort of thing, to be happy under circumstances of such dire poverty—but we were. My sister is a year older than I am, and an angel, if ever there was one. I can't remember my mother—she died when I was very young; but I have heard that it was she from whom my sister gets her graceful manners and her talent for painting. Her brave spirit belongs to herself; I am sure of that. At an early age, as soon as I had scrambled through some sort of an education, they put me into a place of business—a counting-house—in the City. I hated it; perhaps it was from my mother that I acquired that too. I

always abominated business, and I dare say I never tried to do as I ought to have done."

"But what ought you to have done? I am sure I don't know what a person ought to do when he is in a business that he hates—leave it, I should think."

Paul laughed.

"If he is prepared to starve, certainly; he could take no better course. What I ought to have done was so plain and easy, and the results of not doing it so clearly to be read, that I must have been a reckless, bad young man, I am sure, to neglect such an obvious duty. I ought to have worked like a slave for twenty years, with a fortnight's holiday each year, and at the end of that time I should have had an exceeding great reward, in the shape of the magnificent income of two hundred pounds a year, and the noble prospect, if my health held out for another twenty years, and I stuck to my work, and never uttered a complaint, whatever happened to me, of being allowed to retire, with a pension of fifty pounds a year, and the accumulated savings out of my princely income while in active work."

"Is that true? Are there really people who expect others to do that for them?"

"Ay; and it's true, unluckily, not only for me, but for thousands of others, more sensible and better worth other things than I am. Well, you will be astonished to hear that the prospect had no attractions for me; and the actual reality—the work I had to do—I abominated. I neglected my work—disgracefully, they said—and went worshiping idols in the shape of theatres, people who were musical, people who were literary—any kind of people except people who belonged to counting-houses. I didn't, so they said, look after my employer's interests as if they were my own, though I was so handsomely paid for doing so. Poor Katty was very mournful about it; I always told her I would do better, but I never did. So one day one of my chiefs came down upon me. He characterised my conduct in terms which I dare say it merited. He said that if he had many young men like me in his counting-house he would soon be ruined; did I know that? And then he glared at me over his spectacles. He was a very thin, hungry-looking man, I recollect, with 'harpy' written in every sordid line of his sordid countenance. He had on a white waistcoat, and a massive gold watch-chain, which must have cost more than would have paid my salary for two years. The whole aspect of him enraged and disgusted me. I forgot all the spectres of poverty and misery and impecuniosity in the background, and I arose in revolt."

"What did you say to him?"

"I told him I had no doubt that if nobody cared any more for his interests that I did, he would very soon be as poor as I was myself. I added, that if he would make it better worth my while to care for his interests, I might see my way to being more enthusiastic about them."

"I wonder if any one ever said anything like that to Grandpapa Nowell. Well?"

"Of course I had cut my throat by saying it. He almost had a fit on the spot; but by some strange mistake, it was not lawful for him to punish my remarks by instant death. All he could do was to turn me out upon the street; and he lost no time about it."

"Upon the street—but I thought you had a father and a sister."

"My father had died shortly before, much cheered in his last hours, poor fellow, by the reflection that he had got such a good place for me. He left nothing, except twenty pounds to bury him with, and a few small debts. My sister was married. She married very early—before she was twenty. Woodfall, her husband, is a very good fellow—a bit of a vagabond himself—a clerk by day, and by way of being a kind of literary man, on the staff of a small newspaper, by night. He never had, and never will have, a penny of ready money to spare. I fear I shall shock your ears, Miss Nowell, by this coarse talk—you, who are accustomed to hear of bushels of money being disposed of, without the heap becoming any smaller."

"Oh no; it is very interesting—so different from their talk. Please go on."

"Well, but we must be walking on. See how dark it is growing, and dank, and misty."

Peril rose, and they turned their faces homewards—towards "that house," as she would drearily have said.

"I was literally cast upon my own resources," he went on, "and I felt desperate. All sorts of things and expedients rushed through my head. The stage—could I go on the stage, or qualify for a minstrel in a music-hall? I was ready to try anything; but money, it seemed, was wanted for everything. You have no idea what a tyrant money is, when you haven't got any. Katty and her husband took me into their poor home, and I was a witness of their poverty. As I told you, Katty painted a little, and tried to sell her pictures; but I don't think she made ten pounds a year by them, though I thought them beautiful. I hear she is a little more successful now. Of course I could see how hard it was for them to get on alone, never to speak of having to keep a

strapping young man like me. I almost repented having risen up against my employer—and yet, how glad I was to be free from him! I had many a time darkly talked of enlisting. Katty always besought me not to do *that*—as if it were the very last resort of the miserable and destitute—which it isn't, though it is bad enough. Things came to a very bad pass with us all; and one day, when I felt that I would rather cut my throat than give them the burden of providing for me any longer, and when I had just been refused with contumely in my application for a post bringing in sixteen shillings a week, I quietly betook myself to the nearest depôt of a marching regiment, and enlisted. When I had done the deed, I sent word to Katty, and she came off to see me post-haste. How she did cry! I have never forgotten it, and I never shall."

He paused, and Peril looked at him curiously. He went on:

"Of course, at first I was rather worse off than I had been before. There's no need to enlarge upon the horrors I went through. Horrors they were to me, because all my life I had been accustomed to refinement in the midst of our poverty; and Katty, if she had had two chairs and a table for all her furniture, would so have arranged them as to make them look graceful—ay, if they had been short of legs—she is that kind of a person. I got neither petting nor refinement in barracks, as you may imagine. I only didn't take to drinking because of the beastly holes—you will excuse the force of my expressions—which were considered good enough for such as me to drink in. As for gambling, the extent to which you may carry that on the pay of a private was not vast enough to excite my cupidity. This went on for a while, and then in the end education told, I suppose. I got promoted pretty quickly, till I came to be a sergeant. Having attained to that dizzy social and professional eminence, I got dazzled, I suppose, by the brilliance of my position, and proceeded again to cut my throat in a way."

"You did not *desert?*" said Peril breathlessly, evidently seeing no other way in which he could cut his throat under the circumstances.

"No, I fell in love, and got married."

Peril looked up, quickly, and startled.

"Married—and does your wife——"

"My wife——" he began, and paused. No, he could not enter into that sad little story of the past to Peril Nowell. "My wife was the daughter of a poor musician—vagabonds again, like ourselves, but vagabonds with hearts and brains. I had known her before I enlisted. After we had been married two years, my

regiment was ordered to India. I left her and my baby-boy behind me. They were to live with my sister and her husband; and there was talk of music lessons when my wife was stronger. Ah, well! When I think of these days, and how strong we felt in our youth and our love—all of us. I had not been away very long, when they sent me word that Nellie—was dead."

"Oh—h!" said Peril, in the softest whisper. And he saw that there was nothing but sympathy and sadness in her face. She was not then entirely self-absorbed. He went on very quickly:

"Yes—it does not do to talk about it. I never have done. Katty took care of my boy for me. She has contrived to take care of him ever since. I have sent her always what money I could; but if it had been a fortune, it would be nothing—could never repay the love and the care that she has lavished upon my little lad. She has no children of her own; she has taken mine to her heart. My old uncle Lawford, of Wiswell Grange, who was unmarried, at this juncture did do something for me—advanced me the money to buy my discharge, and I got a clerkship in a mercantile house in Bombay. Back again, you see, after all, to the old drudgery. It was a very poor thing, but I was my own master; I had friends, or at any rate acquaintance, who were very kind to me, and made me welcome. I had got a certain kind of knowledge of the world and of the value of its prizes. I had learnt to do without them with the utmost ease, and to consider the scramble for them which is called ambition to be in every way more wearisome than dignified, and I think so now. Those who put their hearts into this scramble, get them broken; and those who don't, get every higher sensibility blunted. I don't think it is worth the price. By the time I had fairly mastered this accomplishment of how to do without things, a change took place. My uncle died. I received the news more than a year ago, and that I succeeded to the possession of Wiswell Grange, and the incomes and revenues of it, which amount to the handsome sum of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, more or less, generally less, I fancy. I came home as soon as I could, and investigated my affairs. I have Humphrey—my son—to think of, or I should not be here, you may be sure. I should like to leave my permanent income quite free, to devote to him and his education. I heard of a place here, six months ago, and came to see after it, and did not get it; and I keep staying on in the hope of better luck another time, though there has been no gleam of it as yet. If I don't soon find something, I shall be driven to retire to my damp old Grange, with Humphrey as a companion, and to live there on my revenues. Now you

know all my story, Miss Nowell—you see to what an insignificant creature you have confided your troubles."

"It is very, very interesting," she said, with a sigh. "I thought when you came into the drawing-room with Hugh the other night, that I could not be mistaken in the meaning of your face."

"Why, what meaning did you attach to it?" he asked remembering the steady look with which she had measured him when Hugh introduced him to her.

"I can hardly tell. I knew nothing about you. I did not know what you were. But when I saw you I felt firmly convinced that you did not care anything about the cloth and yarn market and that perhaps you did about other things; and you see I was right."

"Emphatically right," he said with a laugh.

"I hope you will not soon go away from Darkingford," she continued; "I think it is good for Hugh to have a friend like you—better than these men who think of nothing but money; and better than Miss Hankinson with her wild ideas. Besides, it would be so bad for him if grandpapa got to know of that."

Lawford almost laughed again. Hugh, and always Hugh it was, who pervaded her thoughts and instigated her acts.

"There is every prospect of my remaining here at present," he said drily.

"Here is the gate; we are back again," she said, in a voice which seemed to have changed, and become cold and dead. "And," as her tone grew animated again, "here's Hugh, just coming up from town."

Indeed, as they stood together at the gate, in the light of the lamp immediately opposite, Hugh came up quickly, paused when he saw them, and spoke his cousin's name in astonishment.

"You seem surprised," said she, and it seemed to Lawford, though he knew that he probably imagined it, that there was a softness and a caressing tone in her words. "You did not expect to find me here with Mr. Lawford. He came to call this afternoon, and I asked him to go to Southfield with me."

"Oh," said Hugh, in a tone of reserve; but he shook hands with Lawford at the same time.

"He was rather surprised too," continued Peril; "but, of course, he could only come when I asked him; and I find we have many interests in common."

Lawford was pleased at this, though he was vexed with himself for being so, and felt as if he had made a fool of himself. He had told her things about himself, of which Nowell know nothing, and which he had not the slightest desire to confide to him.

"Good-night, Mr. Lawford. When we have another supper-party, we'll ask you to it."

He wished her good-night, and they separated. Lawford went towards his lodgings. Nowell opened the gate for his cousin.

Chapter V.

An Evening at Home.

"My dear Peril!" said the young man, drawing her arm through his, as they went lingeringly towards the door; "you were quite right when you said I was surprised. You might have 'knocked me down with a feather,' as nervous old ladies say. You ought not, you know—you really ought not."

"Ought not what?"

"To ask a man to go for a long walk with you in that way; and a man of whom we know so little as we do of Lawford."

"You are quite mistaken. He has told me all about himself."

Hugh laughed in a superior manner.

"He might *tell* you anything he chose, of course. That would not make it true."

"Do you mean that if he had told you, you would not have believed him?"

"It would depend on circumstances."

"I thought he was your *friend*," she said, in a tone of withering contempt. "Do you mean that you can doubt a person, and still call him a friend?"

"I don't doubt him, in your sense of the word. I don't suspect him, but I also don't know anything about him. As a stray acquaintance," opening the door with his latch-key, "he is very well, but to treat him in that familiar way——"

"Oh, what nonsense!"

"I don't like these expeditions to Southfield," pursued Nowell. "When you go, you should send for a brougham and go properly. Debit it to me, if you like; but don't walk, or go in omnibuses: it is not fit for you."

"Oh, Hugh! what utter nonsense! you don't understand. And I am not made of white sugar or rose-ice, that I should melt or break on the way."

"It is of no use to talk in that way. I do feel vexed," he said.

"I think you are absurd," replied Peril disdainfully, but with a lurking smile all the time under her curling lip. "I hate that way of making out everything to be wrong."

"*You* do nothing wrong," said the man of the world of twenty-five. "If nobody were any more wicked than you were, we should all get on very well. It is because there are bad and insolent people—in short, Peril, you will allow that I know a great deal more about the outside world than you do, and I tell you, on my honour, as I have often told you before, that it is not fit for you to go about alone as you do."

"You might be one of the Sisters at my old school, instead of a young man," said she, laughing in what sounded a taunting way; but she turned her face away at the same time, not to let him see the look of delight which came over it. At moments like these, when Hugh was so earnestly telling her what he did and what he did not like her to do, Peril felt as if she would gladly go through all her troubles twice over, for the sake of this regard. But it was not her habit to let the sweetness and humility of her answers cloy upon any one's mental palate. They had turned into a sort of library, one of the downstairs rooms, and she now observed tartly:

"You do amaze me, Hugh. There's your great heroine and pattern, the radical Miss Hankinson; I understood that she was in the habit of penetrating alone to all sorts of places—slums and alleys, and goodness knows where—never to mention walking home alone from meetings with people who shall be nameless."

"That is different; Margaret Hankinson is perfectly different," he said hastily.

"Well, she's a good deal older, I know," said Peril, nonchalantly. "That may have something to do with it. But if she goes on errands of charity to the lowest parts of the town, it does seem hard if I mayn't carry a little jelly to a respectable place at the other side of Southfield."

"Now, Peril, don't be disagreeable, but take the advice of a person who knows the world better than you do," said the young fellow, smiling; and Peril, though she feigned mutiny, took him at exactly his own valuation. In her eyes he was a very fine, clever man of the world; and she was daily filled with renewed gratitude and wonder at the fact that he thought so much about her.

"You know," he pursued, "that it is because I think much of you, and not little, that I say these things to you. And then, as I said, if we knew more about Paul Lawford. He seems a very good fellow, but——"

"But a man always believes the worst till he knows the best."

"Nothing of the kind, but a practical man——"

"Is a grand creature, according to you. Look here, Hugh; in

his young days, *he*" (she pointed towards the ceiling, above which was the drawing-room, and nodded) "would have been called an eminently practical man, wouldn't he?"

"One kind of practical man."

"I hope you will never develop into one. Let me tell you this: I'm the least practical person in the world, but I took a long look at your Mr. Lawford that night you brought him here, and I trusted him. He is nothing very brilliant, and he doesn't seem ever to have been in the least successful in the pursuit of pelf. But he has had lots of troubles. He lost his young wife, and he is waiting here for a place now, in order that he may save what money he has for his little boy."

"Lawford—his wife—a little boy!" said Hugh, in spasmodic jerks. "He never told me——"

"No, I dare say not. He told me. Perhaps you think he invented it. Oh, fie, Hugh! I do like a person to be able to rise superior to cautiousness sometimes. If I see him again, I shall be just as polite to him as I have been to-day. *So now you know.*"

The last words were spoken with great emphasis, and with a nod of her head; and she was marching out of the room, when Hugh caught her wrist.

"Be as civil to him as you like, but promise me not to take him walking with you for hours together. Even if you don't agree with me, promise me this."

"Now that is a kind of argument I can understand," said Peril. "I don't agree with you in the least, Hugh. I think you are absurd, and I promise what you ask."

"Good girl!" came after her like an echo, as she ran upstairs.

Hugh followed more slowly, and went to his own room, his thoughts busied with a communication that he had to make to his grandfather. After he had, to use his own expression, "brushed himself up a bit," he went into the drawing-room, where Mr. Nowell always sat now, as it was on the same level with his bedroom, and he was too great an invalid to stir about much. Hugh found him sitting in his big chair by the fire, waiting for him; and Mrs. Robson, grey and still, bending over her work, kept the old man company. When Hugh entered, she rose and vanished silently from the room. It was the one hour of the day when she could leave her charge, and absent herself for some little time with an easy mind; for he was alone, and in good hands—in the hands which she wished to influence him. Peril knew better than to come near and listen to business disquisitions. It now became the young man's office to tell his relative about the business of the day—what cotton they had bought, what yarn they had

sold—to quote the last prices when the market had closed that afternoon, and produce any gossip which he might have heard at the club or on 'Change, or from men he might have met during the day.

Mr. Nowell listened to these dry details—they would have been dry to all but one man in ten thousand—and drank them in with the same kind of rapture that a musician might experience in hearing some fine symphony. Every name that was mentioned he knew, and knew the history of its owner. He followed the account of the market with the greatest eagerness and the utmost intelligence. This cotton market, or rather the operations within it, had been the ruling passion of his life, and would remain the ruling passion in his death; and it was probable that, however long he might live, and though memory and mind should decay, this one question—money, and that article the manipulation of which represented money to him, would find him as lucid, as eager, as ready to grapple with it and as keen to understand it, as ever he had been in his brightest days. Already his memory was not what it had been; his hearing had long been dulled, and his comprehension was slow on many points—but on this, never.

"Well," he quavered, fixing his gleaming, sunken eyes upon his grandson, "how did ya leave things?"

"The market closed firm. There's a big consignment of Sea Island reported at Liverpool. Hankinson thinks we had better get it."

"Why, of course," snapped the old man. "Didn't he telegraph?"

"No; he thought he'd hear what I had to say from you to-morrow."

"He's a fool. You go to him after supper, and tell him to take the lot at sixpence two-sixteenths—not a fraction more, remember. They'll jump at it."

"Yes, I guess they will. Do you know that Pennsylvania and Reading are down again?"

"Agatha read it out this morning. That's nothing. They are bound to go up again, and we must just hold on."

"There's another thing," pursued Hugh, eyeing him askance, with a half smile of anticipation on his face. "I only heard it just before I came up. It won't be in the papers till to-morrow."

"Ay, what's that?" asked his elder, in the tone of one who is accustomed to hear the exaggerated statements of youth, and to receive them with serene indifference. He did not trouble himself to raise his head, but sat with his chin a little sunk upon his

chest, his shoulders high, his eyes dull and unexpectant—a feeble old man one would have said, very near his end, and past caring for the troubles and turmoils of business, or the poor joys and pains of gains and losses.

"Why," said Hugh slowly, "Hutchinsons of Broadfield are down at last."

"What!" he almost screamed, and the listless and sunken figure sprang erect as if electrified. He started up with gleaming eyes looking like some old Lear, so far as his white hairs and reverend aspect went, and with as wild a light in his eyes; but from a cause as far removed from the cause of Lear's woe, as the furthest east is from the ultimate west.

"Hutchinsons down—Martin Hutchinson!" which name, by the way he pronounced 'Utcheson. "Say that again, lad—say it again!" he shrieked in a quavering voice. "'Utchesons down; did I hear thee right?"

"Quite right," said Hugh coldly, revolted, not amused, as he had expected to be. "The news came about half-past four, and it spread like wild-fire, of course. They are gone for three quarters of a million."

"Ah—ugh, ugh!" he cackled. "What news, lad! What news! I began to think I should never see the day. Ha, ha! Hech! oh, ho! 'Utchesons are gone at last. Thank God for that! Ay, ay! pride will have a fall—a fall. Pride will have a fall. What's that the Scripture says—'the mighty—how are the mighty fallen!' I can't remember. But 'Utchesons were proud, and they have fallen."

Hugh felt himself thrill uneasily, with the conviction that if pride were to have a fall, surely James Nowell's day of humiliation must be nigh at hand. And he felt as if he, Hugh Nowell, though he loathed the whole thing so deeply, must be in some way included in this fall when it came. The sons had to suffer for the sins of the fathers. This horrible triumphing in the fall of people whose sin against him was that in the days of his first uprising he had been their servant, and that in later years they had steadily refused to acknowledge him as their social equal, was so horrible to Hugh, that he felt it impious, and discovered something weird and fearful, as indeed there was, in the aspect of the old man, as he chuckled and giggled, and rubbed his hands together, and laughed in a senile manner, and carried on a sort of low, rejoicing whinnying to himself over the fate of the unfortunate Hutchinsons.

They had committed several unforgivable sins against him. They had been the firm in whose office he had begun his career as

"boy" to run errands, and be at everyone's beck and call. They had been a great and powerful firm then, and as years had gone on, and he had gone up, they had come down; they had always been proud people, socially as well as commercially. In the days of their failing fortunes, they had (though they had helped him materially when he had first started his little independent business, the germ of his present vast factories) remembered his and their relative positions in days gone by, and had consistently refused to admit him to their own level socially. Even when he was rolling in wealth, and the first adverse rumours were gaining currency about their house, Mrs. Hutchinson had refused to have Mr. Nowell presented to her at a public entertainment. He had found the upper-class doors of Darkingford closed against him more rigorously than they might have been in a place where he was unknown. Mrs. Hutchinson had not forgotten that he had been her husband's office-boy, and would rather have died than see him sit down in her drawing-room. He had not forgotten it either, and he rejoiced now, coarsely, hideously, and grossly.

"Stop a bit," he said suddenly, pausing in the midst of his chuckles. "Are we in for anything with them? I forget."

"Eight thousand," said Hugh reluctantly; and went on more quickly, "but everyone says there will be an arrangement. They will liquidate, and then they'll be able to pull through. Everyone is sorry about it."

"There will be no arrangement with *this* creditor," he screamed, in fierce excitement; "no arrangements with me. I'll have my money; every penny of it I'll have: and if they don't pay it down, I'll take proceedings against them. Eight thousand—ay, ay! ay, ay! I'll have it. I'll make him bite the dust, and his mincing madam of a wife, too. Wait awhile! Hech! hech!"

"But I don't see how in common decency we can grind it out of him, when everybody else arranges. It would be simply monstrous."

"Ya young greenhorn!" his elder chid him vehemently. "Howd your silly tongue! Much you know about it." And then, as if he rejoiced, and congratulated himself on his great good fortune, he went on, mumbling and chuckling, and what Hugh and Peril would have called, in Lancashire idiom, "chunnering" in low tones over the delightful news of Hutchinsons' collapse. Poor Hugh, who felt less like a man of the world now than when admonishing his handsome cousin on the impropriety of inviting casual acquaintances to take walks with her, sat silent. His cheerful spirit was overclouded. Hankinson, Whittaker, Lloyd, everybody had said that the Hutchinsons were very unfor-

tunate; that they were honourable people, and that if treated with an even moderate degree of forbearance, it was probable that they would recover themselves, and that all claims would be eventually paid. Every decent man hoped it. Hugh, who was open-handed, would have liked to be amongst the foremost to waive their claims for an indefinite time; but this dreadful old man, who looked just now more like an incarnate fiend, chuckling to himself over some good person's destruction, would, as he knew, rather die, rather see the whole mercantile community of Darkingford rise up in a body, and point the finger and cry shame upon him, than abate one jot of his delicious, much-longed-for revenge.

Oh, when he was the master, thought Hugh, then should a different *régime* begin, and "Nowell's" earn as proud a name for their princely generosity, as they now had for its opposite. They were not merchant princes; no one ever saw their name on any list of committee or subscriptions to promote any social, political, or charitable object. They grabbed their pelf with greedy hands, and when they had clutched it they held it fast. How long would the present wretched condition of things go on? What was the good of blinking the fact that this awful old man was worse than a superfluity, a nuisance? His eager young spirit stretched forward, and saw such beautiful vistas in the future, when he should have this money, and prove to the world that he knew how to use it graciously and competently. The present was so long, so hard, and so dry.

Peril and Mrs. Robson came in, one after the other, and both beheld with amazement Mr. Nowell's state of excitement, and his grotesque chucklings and rubbings of the hands.

They looked towards Hugh for information, and both understood perfectly, when he simply said, almost in his ordinary voice, for the old man was lost in his thoughts:

"Hutchinsons have come down, and he's offering a burnt sacrifice in his soul."

"To his master the devil," remarked Peril, beneath her breath. They had not lived with him for eighteen, seventeen, and four years respectively, and remained unacquainted with the name of Hutchinson.

Then ensued three-quarters of an hour of unmitigated dreariness. When Mr. Nowell had his family around him thus, he exacted from them a due meed of respectful attention. No reading or writing, or any occupation which could abstract them from the consciousness of his presence, was permitted. Mrs. Robson and Peril might work; Hugh must sit still near his chair, and tell him things, the more ill-natured the better.

Seen from the outside, and judging from appearances, no one would have been justified in calling Mr. Nowell a wicked old man. Conventional opinion does not discern wickedness in a life of unblemished respectability; in a large fortune, gained chiefly by one's own exertions; in diligent attendance of a man at his place of worship, so long as bodily infirmity did not prevent him from going to it, and in apparently liberal contributions to the funds connected with his religious body; in a household whose affairs were regulated by clock-work, and whose routine included family prayers every evening without exception. Conventional opinion sees in all this the embodiment of its own sentiments, the perfect obedience to its own laws; it can but smile and approve, and say, What a fine old man old James Nowell is! Let conventional opinion inquire a little further—go back a little into its dear old James Nowell's history, and it will become cognizant of various facts, which it will of course judge from its own point of view.

He had been born, bred, and begun to work at a time favourable to the development of such cleverness as he possessed. It was not, as must have been seen, the cleverness of a high intellect, or of a broad and expansive, or even humane mind; it was the cleverness which consists in an unlimited capacity for heaping up gain. Perfectly ignorant of the world and of any kind of society outside the pale of the Darkingford Royal Exchange and the congregation that, along with himself, "sat under" the minister of Ebenezer Chapel—a clique to whom money first, and cotton, with respectability following next, were the chief and supreme objects of this life—he never wished or thought of moving from their groove, to fit into which he would, indeed, seem to have been created. At thirty he was already doing well in a business point of view, and had then taken to wife the good-looking, high-natured daughter of a dissenting minister of the city. Her name was Dorothy Whittaker, and the reason which could have induced her to marry him must remain one of those inscrutable mysteries, of which there are such numberless examples every day thrust under one's notice. "Why did that woman marry that man?" is the question which occurs to one's mind only less often than the other question: "What induced that man to marry that woman?"

Perhaps she had imagined that his handsome face, for he was handsome in his youth, concealed a spirit equally agreeable; perhaps she believed that under his taciturnity and gravity, lay hidden a fiery, loving nature: it is one of the traps into which women oftenest fall, and the fact of his wishing to marry her would naturally encourage so pleasing an illusion. If that were

the case, a few years of married life must have undeceived her, and very plainly discovered to her that there was no rough outside crust, with love, and passion, and romance beneath; it was all hewn out of the same piece, and that piece was granite. She never let him know, if she did undergo this disillusion. As years went on, and they went to the more ambitious house in Great North Street, she wore her silks and satins, and the massive, ungainly jewellery with which he presented her from time to time (never without an eye to its soundness as an investment), with a certain comely dignity, but her face was never seen to beam with happiness—perhaps, in a member of such a serious congregation, that might have looked out of place—and she gradually grew more fond of books and solitude, and less and less disposed to seek any outside amusements or society. She bore him two sons, and down in her heart she craved, with what a craving only she knew, for a daughter. She thought how sweet such a companion would be—one who could never be taken away from her and put into a counting-house, and hardened just at the most susceptible years into a money-making machine—one to whom she might speak out some of her shut-up thoughts. But the daughter never came; she never needed to choose amongst the many pretty, fanciful names of which she had made a list, as being sweet names to call a little girl. "Sister," "daughter," were two blessed words whose spell never was exercised in the dreary house at Great North Street. The sons, as has been said, did not grow up after their father's heart. Most happily for Mrs. Nowell, she died of a fever before the time of wrangling came between father and sons; she was spared the agony of seeing verified what she had long been secretly conscious of, that in her husband's life and actions, money, gain, business, had a stronger influence by far than she had.

The wrangling did come—after she was gone. It was fierce and miserable; there were battles and disputes, the father wishing to chain the sons to the counting-house, and, oblivious of the fact that he had given them a liberal education, repeating with asinine persistency that what had been good enough for him ought to be good enough for them too. They had more of their mother than of him in them—her sensitiveness, and some of her shrinking delicacy; they had not the rough, coarse strength to combat him with his own weapons; he practically won the battle, and destroyed them in the process. And then, as the conqueror, he "proclaimed peace where he had made a solitude."

When he had got rid of them, and before they died, he made them each an allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year

with the promise of a free pardon to either or both of them who should come and acknowledge himself to have been wrong, and submit to his father's will in the matter of entering the counting-house. He then summoned Mrs. Robson, a poor relation, who had recently become a widow, to keep his house for him; and he went on his grim, sordid way, clawing up money, cutting down expenses, and firmly convinced that in offering his sons a respectable business, and rigorously refusing to help them into professions which he hated, he had done his whole duty by them. Hugh's father had been the first to marry; and he supported himself and his young wife for some little time by a slender kind of literary work. They both died; and then the grandfather came forward, fetched the boy home to him, and took care, having been warned, as he would have said, by the example of his sons, that Hugh should not be spoiled for a business man by any nonsense of "college education and kickshaws."

The advent of the little boy had made sunshine in one life at least—in that of Mrs. Robson. Starved for so long of any object on which to lavish her affections, reduced by dire poverty to passive obedience to the dictates of her employer (for he always let her understand that he viewed their relation strictly in a commercial light), the poor woman hailed the child as a sort of saviour, and loved him passionately and with a dog-like fidelity. Everything that he did had an interest for her. His lessons, his masters, his fights with his schoolfellows, his holidays and his punishments, were as much to her as the most thrilling of dramas. This love awoke an almost miraculous tact and intelligence in an otherwise mediocre mind and character. She got to know exactly what to say and do and suggest to the grandfather which should be of most service for Hugh and his interests. She looked forward with ardour to the time when the old man should be dead, and her darling in possession of the good things for which they had waited so long.

Then Peril appeared on the scene—a girl of fifteen, looking four years older, and beautiful as the day—just after Nowell's twenty-first birthday. Mrs. Robson's fears instantly took fire. Of course Hugh would fall in love with the girl, and so arouse the displeasure of his grandfather, who abhorred marriages of consanguinity. Or, and this was after all the most alarming contingency, Mr. Nowell himself might succumb to the spell of Peril's miraculous and unusual beauty. He was an old man, and all old men were fools where a young woman, beautiful or ugly, was in question. He would dote upon her, and favour her to the detriment of Hugh's interests. In either case, she hated the

interloper, because she had a small nature, which long years of oppression had made also hard, and she grudged Peril every word of civility from the lips of either the old man or the young one; and spent many an hour of the night in scheming how to get her sent away, either to school or anywhere else, so that she and her matchless face and beautiful form got removed from the sight of the two men.

Peril was not sent away, and the crisis got somehow tided over; but not before the girl had discovered the woman's feelings towards her, and had made haste to return them with interest. The hatred, though it smouldered, was still there; the jealousy, though concealed, was as strong as ever. Hugh had not come through the ordeal unscathed. For about a month he had had eyes and ears for no one but his cousin; she was like no one—like nothing that he had ever seen before. He was dazzled, bewildered, stunned by her. And then, perhaps, the very wildness and exaggeration of his sentiment wrought its own cure, or some sudden fury or passion of Peril's had opened his eyes in an unguarded moment. He had never ceased to be her friend; he was proud of her great beauty; was as much of a martinet about her incomings and outgoings as brothers generally are, and treated her with a frank openness of affection which might have shown her the true nature of his attachment to her. But she did not want to know it. It gleamed upon her at times, taking her unawares, as it were, and she always thrust it away from her, and secretly told herself that so long as she knew of no rival she was safe. And she had met with none yet. This Margaret Hankinson, of whom he spoke with such enthusiasm, was older by two years than himself, and, as it seemed to Peril, plain. She felt her beneath her notice as a rival, actual or possible; and on this particular evening she was in a much sweeter mood than usual. Her walk and talk with Lawford, which Hugh had so condemned, had done her good. As they sat in almost unbroken silence, wearing out this ghastly three-quarters of an hour before supper, she thought once or twice of her companion that afternoon, and wondered what there had been about him to make her open out her mind to him as she had done. He did not seem to be a particularly strong character; she glanced at Hugh, with his resolute lip and straight eyebrows, his look of gallant youthful determination—no, Mr. Lawford was but a languid, effeminate creature compared with this strong young cousin of hers, who could scarcely wait till his time came for springing into the arena, and, as it were, taking the whole amphitheatre by storm. *When* the time came, thought Peril, when he bounded forward, scattering

his wealth in royal style, and making up for the time lost in drudgery, what a triumph it would be! How the women would admire and applaud, and how the men would envy! And what would she be doing in the meantime? Well, she had a happy confidence that she would not be playing an obscure part. Perhaps they might make their *début* hand in hand, and then men might join in the chorus of applause, and women turn pale with envy.

Supper was presently announced, and a tray brought up containing Mr. Nowell's evening meal. The three others went downstairs, and exchanged the first comments upon the manner in which the news of the Hutchinson episode had been received.

"It's no good," said Hugh; "we shall have to circumvent him in some way. We shall have the whole town hooting at us if we press for our money when the others don't."

"Pay him out of his own money, and pretend it is Mr. Hutchinson's, and that he has been very much distressed to raise it," said Peril vindictively. "That would be a lovely revenge, Hugh!"

He laughed, and said they must certainly do something. When they went out of the dining-room, Hugh, instead of going upstairs again, took his hat from its peg.

"Where are you going?" asked Peril suspiciously.

"I have to go to Hankinson's about some business. Perhaps I may go on to Lawford's."

"Indeed!" said she, going into the vestibule and capturing his hat, while he put on his coat; "suppose I don't let you have this?"

Mrs. Robson, on her way upstairs, cast an uneasy glance behind her.

"Suppose I take it from you?" he rejoined.

"Indeed! I should like to see you; if I ran upstairs, it would be the hare and the tortoise, and no mistake."

She had put his hat on her head, and turning, was making with the speed of lightning for a run upstairs, but found herself checkmated. While she had been circling about, insulting him with comparisons about the hare and the tortoise, he had turned the key in the vestibule door, and now stood looking at her with a malicious smile, and twirling the key round in his thumb and finger.

"You wretch!" exclaimed Peril; "that is how you always cheat me. Underhand work, I call it."

"That is how I keep possession of my hats, gloves, and comforters. When a man is attacked, he must defend himself.

Most hats suit you, Peril, but not a hard round billycock like that. Suppose you drop it."

"If it doesn't suit me, fancy what an object you must look in it!" said Peril. "You haven't fastened the street door, so you can catch me if you can."

She made a triumphant dart towards it, but he was beforehand with her, and put his back against it, confronting her, smiling.

"If it comes to a trial of strength," he observed, "I know who will win. Give me my hat, Peril, or I shall be finding Hankinson out, and not be able to deliver my message about 'sixpence two-sixteenths, and not a fraction more.'"

"The strong-minded Margaret will deliver it accurately enough," said Peril flippantly. "I should think she could remember all such things as that, and understand them."

"Well, I should hope so. I should think even you might do that."

"Not I. Pray what *is* sixpence two-sixteenths? Is it a quart, or a peck, or a bushel? And is it for potatoes, or waste paper, or——"

"It's cotton, by the pound. Best Sea Island. Give me my hat;" and he took it off her head.

"I hate Hankinson, and I hate Lawford, and all the rest of them."

"I wish you had begun to hate Lawford a little earlier in the day then. There would have been some meaning in it if you had. As for poor Hankinson——"

"It isn't him; it is because it leaves me alone with these two people. One of these evenings, when you come in you will find that my brain has given way, and that I have begun to shout and sing. Then you'll have to put me into a cab, and carry me off to a madhouse."

"Well, I know it is gruesome in the extreme. What can I do?"

"You can get away from it, and go and talk to Miss Hankinson," she said tartly.

"Nothing of the kind," was the hasty reply. "He told me to go and tell Hankinson about this cotton. I won't go to Lawford's. I will come back soon."

"Do, and I won't make faces at you while you are reading prayers. How your voice trembled last night!"

With a low laugh of malignant enjoyment, she opened the vestibule door, and ran upstairs, leaving him to go and see Mr.—or Miss—Hankinson.

Going upstairs, Peril found that Mr. Nowell was being led off

to bed. He had got so excited over Hugh's news about the Hutchinson failure that he had suddenly collapsed, and was now tottering away, supported by his man Smith. Peril saw how very old and broken and feeble he looked, and she realised suddenly that they would not now have very long to wait. She instantly began to build at the future.

"I feel so happy to-night—so much more light-hearted," she thought. "I feel as if things would come right after all. If I can only have a little patience, and *seem* mild and gentle, perhaps it will all come right. And if it did—in that way—I should never need to seem any more; I should be good, because I should feel good. To-night, in the vestibule, I nearly got into a passion, just for a moment, and then, instead of promising to come home, Hugh would have looked at me as he does—and nearly freezes me. He does not know that it is not I, but something in me—a devil—that I cannot help it, and that many a time when it was too late, I have cried all night—so he looks at me in that way. But now, there is something worth being patient for, and I will—I will not once give way."

Pamela, Lady Edward Fitzgerald.

Towards the end of August 1880, a little funeral procession might have been seen wending its way though the village of Thames Ditton in Surrey. It followed the body of Pamela, Lady Edward Fitzgerald, which for the third time was being conveyed to the grave.

Buried first at Montmartre in 1831, her remains were, not so long ago, re-interred in a private vault in Paris, and were finally transferred to English ground. There they now rest among us, and it is worth while to read the various memoirs of this once beautiful and fascinating being, to whom we have at last given the favour of a little earth. Over her whole life there rests a halo of mystery and romance before which fiction may well hide its diminished head. Mystery surrounded Pamela from her very birth. It is all very well to say now that she was the daughter of the Duke of Orleans and Madame de Genlis, but for many years such a supposition was barely hinted at. Courtiers might exchange knowing smiles and glances in the gilded waiting-rooms of Versailles, but who would be bold enough to charge Madame de Genlis, the fair, the chaste, the irreproachable "gouvernante," with a slip from the paths of virtue? She kept up a little court in her suite of apartments in the Palais Royal; she gave audiences, balls, parties, concerts; she was the secretary of the Duchess of Orleans, the "gouvernante" of the Princess Adelaide and of the young Princes; and possessed the entire confidence of the Duke.

While usurping the position of the Duchess and generally believed to be the paramour of the Duke, Madame la Comtesse wrote long treatises on morality and learnedly discussed the duties of mothers and the prerogatives of governesses. She never said anything about a little journey of hers to Spa in 1776, where she remained five months drinking the mineral waters. This visit might have accounted more satisfactorily for the birth of Pamela, than that interesting fiction which Madame gives in her memoirs. She acknowledges that she always "loved better to occupy herself with that which she created in her imagination than with that which existed; she had no pretensions to the power of foreseeing, but she had to that of inventing" ('Mémoires de Madame de Genlis,' ch. viii. p. 19).

How she introduced Pamela to the Palais Royal was a masterstroke of ingenuity. In order to perfect her *élèves* in the habit

of speaking foreign languages, Madame conceived the idea of placing along with them a little English girl nearly their own age. Accordingly the Duke wrote to London to a certain person named Forth to send him a pretty little English girl of five or six years of age. He also wished to get an English horse of some particular breed. In about a month Mr. Forth wrote back as follows: "I have the honour to send to your most serene Highness the, handsomest mare and the prettiest little girl in England." Pamela used to say that she perfectly remembered being brought from England to France by the confidential man who went every year to England to purchase horses for the Duc d'Orléans. She was conducted to the Palais Royal by this man, who took her through a small private side-door and delivered her up to the Prince, who was there waiting for her, and who embraced her several times. The Prince then carried her in his arms through some dark passages into the apartments of Madame de Genlis and said, as he entered, "Voilà notre petit bijou!" She was seated on a sofa between the Prince and Madame de Genlis, who embraced her alternately, and they cried a great deal. They made her out three years older than she really was in order that her age might not coincide with that mysterious journey which Madame de Genlis had made to Spa (Madame la Baronne d'E——'s account of Pamela given in R. R. Madden's 'Lives of the United Irishmen').* But compare with this the charming, romantic story which Madame de Genlis gives. From her, we learn that Pamela was the daughter of a gentleman of good family (qui avait de la naissance) named Seymour, who had married, against the consent of his family, a person of the lowest condition named Mary Sims. He took her to Newfoundland to a place called Fogo; there Pamela was born and was called "Nancy." Her father died, and the mother returned to England with the child, then eighteen months old. As her husband was disinherited, she was reduced to great misery, and forced to work for her bread. She had settled at Christ Church, which place Mr. Forth passed through four years after, and being commissioned by the Duke of Orleans to send over a young English girl, he obtained this child from her mother.

"When I began to be really attached to Pamela," continues Madame "I was very uneasy lest her mother might be desirous of claiming her by legal process, to obtain grants of money which I could not give. I consulted several English lawyers, and they told me that the only means of protecting myself from this species of persecution, was to get the mother to give me her daughter as an apprentice for the sum of twenty-five guineas. She agreed, and appeared in the Court of King's Bench before Chief Justice Mansfield. She then signed an agreement by which

* Scarce edition, 1860. Published by the Catholic Publishing Company, 61 New Bond Street.

she gave me her daughter as an apprentice, till she became of age, and could not claim her from me until she had paid all the expenses I had been at for her maintenance. To this paper Lord Mansfield put his seal as Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench" ('Mémoires de Madame de Genlis,' ch. xx. p. 104).

Madame had always had a passionate desire for a little journey to England, and in 1788 she left her *élèves* and made this "*petit voyage*," remaining away six weeks. Her mission had a good deal to do, no doubt, with Pamela's *apprenticeship*, but she discreetly says little about it. Pamela was not the only child by *adoption* of the gouvernante: there was also a certain Casimir, the reputed son of a Prussian tailor, of whom she generously took care. All the details given by Madame of the origin of Pamela must be considered as purely fictitious. Meantime, the little stranger was treated by Princess Adelaide and the young Princes as their companion and friend; she shared the same amusements, enjoyed the same care as they did, and had a strong personal resemblance to them. Part of their education consisted of acting, in a *salle de comédie*, all the dramatic pieces in Madame de Genlis' Théâtre d'Education. These plays had such a highly moral tone, and the authoress herself was so passionately enamoured of the seven cardinal virtues, that it must have been delightful for her to have witnessed her *élèves* at once improving their principles and their elocution under her auspices. Let us hear what this arch-hypocrite, this Tartuffe in petticoats, says in her memoirs:

"There was one performance (a pantomime) so remarkable that I cannot pass it over in silence. It was that of Psyche, persecuted by Venus. Madame de Lawoestein,* then fifteen years old, represented Venus, her sister, Psyche, and Pamela, Love. There never were three persons together who united so much beauty and grace. Pamela was extremely handsome; candour and sensibility were the chief traits in her character—she never told a falsehood or employed the slightest deceit during the whole course of her education. She was *spirituelle* from sentiment, her conversation was always agreeable and emanated from the heart. This charming child was the most idle I ever knew; she had no memory, she was very wild, which even added to the grace of her figure as it gave her an air of vivacity, which, joined to her natural indolence and to a great deal of wit, made her very engaging. Her figure was fine and light, she flew like Atalanta. Her mind was idle to the greatest degree—thus was she in after-life a person the least capable of reflection."

Madame had not only a very clear judgment, but she had a proper appreciation of what the world would say; she knew how far to carry her deceit, and she seldom overdid the *rôle* that she had laid out for herself. We catch a more vivid glance of her and her

* Eldest daughter of Madame de Genlis, married to the Marquis de Lawoestein.

pupils from the memoirs of Madame de Larochejaquelin, who, when a child, was taken by her grandmother to see the young Princes and their sister Adelaide. Some new paintings were exhibited at the Louvre, and the great doors were flung open.

"Madame de Genlis was attired in a very simple style in a dark dress. I rather think that the hood of the cloak was drawn over her head. She appeared to me thin, and of a dark complexion; her physiognomy was exquisite; her mouth, her teeth and her eyes were beautiful. She had an air of such amiability, mildness, seductiveness (*elle avait l'air si aimable, si doux, si séduisant, si spirituel*). The young Princes looked very singular, being all dressed like English children; their hair fell in ringlets over their shoulders without powder. While the painters and under-governesses were explaining the paintings to them, my grandmother and Madame de Genlis were paying each other a thousand flattering compliments. ('Oh! what happiness! It is an age since I saw Madame de Genlis,' &c.) My grandmother saw at Madame de Genlis' side a beautiful girl about seven years old, and she said, 'You have only two daughters; who then is this beautiful creature?' 'Oh,' replied Madame in a low voice, 'it is a very touching and interesting story, which I cannot recount to you at the present moment;' she added, 'you have as yet seen nothing, you must now judge of that portrait.' Then raising her voice, 'Pamela, act Héloïse.' Immediately Pamela took out her comb, her fine hair, without powder, fell in disorder on her shoulders. She threw herself to the ground on her knees, raised her eyes to heaven, and her whole figure expressed an ecstasy of passion. Pamela continued in this attitude; during the time, Madame de Genlis appeared enchanted, made signs and remarks to my grandmother, who paid her some compliments upon the form and grace of her young *élève*" ('Mémoires de Madame la Marquise Larochejaquelin,' p. 19).

Among the pictures at Versailles is one which is copied from an original by Antonio Giroust, that once formed part of the Palais Royal gallery. It is described as "La Leçon de Harpe." Mademoiselle d'Orléans is taking a lesson on the harp from Madame de Genlis, while Mademoiselle Pamela is turning over the leaves. The artist has reserved all his power for Pamela: a more exquisite picture of radiant loveliness, joyous vivacity of face, sweetness of expression and sylph-like grace of form, could hardly be found—while Madame de Genlis looks sharp and rigid, the very incarnation of an educational bugbear. While these lessons were going on, France was fast approaching the verge of the Revolution. Even in the peaceful retreat of Belle-Chasse, where Madame de Genlis and her pupils usually lived, the storm was felt, as it gathered strength every day. The Duke of Orleans and his sons took up the Republican cause. Madame de Genlis herself was an admirer of the Constituent Assembly, and every Sunday the most distinguished members met at Belle-Chasse. Barrère, Pétion, David and others were constantly at Madame

de Genlis' weekly soirées, and discussed the burning questions of that momentous time. It is doubtful if Pamela took any part in such discussions—she had no resemblance to Madame de Staël, her mind was not large enough to take in public matters. We hear sometimes of her enthusiasm for liberty, &c., and she may have indulged in a few pretty speeches of the kind, but she was not the stuff of which political women are made—her nature was rather that of a bird that loves to sing and fly among flowers and sunshine.

She had just reached her fifteenth year when the Duke of Orleans directed his notary to draw up a settlement of 1500 livres upon her. The notary declared that the "orphan" was not competent to receive it unless she had a guardian. "Well then," said the Duke, "she can herself chose a guardian: enough of the deputies come to Belle-Chasse, and she can have no delay in choosing one." On the Sunday following, Pamela was told of the Duke's speech. "I have not much time to choose," she said, "but if citizen Barrère would favour me by becoming my guardian, I would accept of him." Barrère at once consented and the contract was signed. We shall hear again of him and of another interview with Pamela when she had reached the autumn of her days. The fury of the Revolution soon broke out with full force, and among the hairbreadth escapes was one in which Madame de Genlis and Pamela were the actors. On this occasion, Madame showed a considerable amount of coolness and presence of mind. She had only to call up her powers of deception, and they were fully equal to the emergency. If she were not high-priestess of the art of lying, who could be? for her whole life had been a carefully acted lie. Accompanied by the Comte de Beaujolais, her niece Henrietta de Sercy, and Pamela, she went one day to visit a country house six leagues from Paris. They passed by the Colombe; unfortunately it was market-day, and in the village a multitude of people were assembled from the neighbouring country.

"As we traversed the village," says Madame de Genlis, "the people crowded round our carriage, imagining that I was the Queen accompanied by Madame her daughter, and the Dauphin. They arrested us and obliged us to descend from our carriage, on which they seized, as well as the coachman and our attendants. The commandant of the National Guard, Monsieur Baudry, came to our assistance and managed to conduct us to his house, which was quite close, undertaking to keep us prisoners. Through an immense crowd we were let into his house, and during the short passage we heard furious cries, 'A la lanterne!' Finally we were taken into the house, but a quarter of an hour had not elapsed before 4000 people besieged the doors, burst them open and rushed into the house with a terrible tumult. We were in the garden, and when I heard the people approaching I told my *élèves* to commence playing immediately the game of four corners with me. Instantly a frightful crowd of men and women rushed into the garden; they were much surprised to find us

playing at this game; we ceased playing on the spot, however, and I approached them with the greatest calm. I told them I was the wife of one of their deputies, that I was able to write a letter to Paris to clear up all things, which letter I prayed them to dispatch by a courier. They listened, but some cried out that it was all lies I told. At last the proposition was accepted, but till five o'clock the following morning, the tumult continued, and drunkenness lent new horrors to it."

Madame de Genlis soon found that France was no place for her, so at the close of 1791 she escaped to England, accompanied by Mademoiselle d'Orléans, and Pamela, who was then between sixteen and seventeen years of age. The trio took refuge in a quiet country retreat at Bury, in Suffolk. It was here that Sheridan first saw Pamela. One day when he and Lord Edward Fitzgerald were sitting in Mrs. Sheridan's sick-room, he began to describe "the beautiful French girl" he had lately seen, adding that she put him strongly in mind of what his own wife had been in the first bloom of her youth and beauty. Mrs. Sheridan turned to Lord Edward and said with a melancholy smile, "I should like you, when I am dead, to marry that girl" (Moore's 'Life of Sheridan,' vol. ii. p. 189). But though Lord Edward had several opportunities of meeting Pamela whilst she was in England, he had such a horror of learned ladies, as embodied in the person of the formidable Madame de Genlis, that he invariably declined. Mrs. Sheridan died the 28th of June, 1792, and on the 20th of October in the same year Madame de Genlis and her pupils set out on their return to France, and made that memorable journey from London to Dartford, which Sheridan's talent for practical joking turned into such a ridiculous farce. Tony Lumpkin, when he brought Mrs. Hardcastle and her niece that forty miles drive to his aunt Pedigree's—along Feather-bed Lane, over the stones at Up-and-down Hill, and through Heavy-tree Heath, till he soused them in the horse-pond at the bottom of their own garden—did not play a better trick than Sheridan did on the astute Madame de Genlis, whose mind was as full as ever Mrs. Hardcastle's was of highwaymen and horrors. "Crackskull Common" would have been a sound of doom in her ears, and she plaintively mentions her "terror at crossing the desert plains of Newmarket without an escort." She was therefore fair game for a joke. At ten o'clock in the morning, the party set out in two carriages: one with six horses, and the other—which conveyed the maid-servants—with four. Madame de Genlis describes the adventure so solemnly that it is worth while giving her own words.

"When we were about a quarter of a league from London," she says "the French servant, who had never made the journey from Dover to London but once before, thought he perceived that we were not on the

right road, and on his making the remark to me I perceived it also. The postillions, on being questioned, said that they only wished to avoid a small hill, and that they would soon return into the high-road again. After an interval of three quarters of an hour, seeing that we still continued our way through a country entirely new to me, I again interrogated both footman and postillions, and they repeated their assurance that we should soon rejoin the usual road. Notwithstanding this, however, we still pursued our course with extreme rapidity in the same unknown route, and as I remarked that the post-boys and footman always answered me in a strange sort of laconic manner and appeared as if they were afraid to stop, my companions and I began to look at each other with a mixture of surprise and uneasiness. We renewed our inquiries, and at last they answered that it was indeed true that they had lost their way, but that they had wished to conceal it from us till they had found the cross roads to Dartford, and that now having been for an hour and a half on that road, we had but two miles to go before we should reach Dartford. It appeared to me very strange that people should lose their way between London and Dover, but the assurance that we were only half a league from Dartford dispelled the vague fear that had for a moment agitated us. At last, after nearly an hour had elapsed, seeing that we still were not arrived at the end of our stage, our uneasiness increased to a degree which amounted even to terror. It was with much difficulty that I made the post-boys stop opposite a small village which lay on our left; in spite of my shouts they still went on, till at last the French servant (for the other did not interfere) compelled them to stop. I then sent to the village to ask how far we were from Dartford, and my surprise may be guessed when I received for answer that we were now twenty-two miles from it. Concealing my suspicions, I took a guide in the village and declared it was my wish to return to London, as I found I was now at a less distance from that city than from Dartford. The post-boys made much resistance, and even behaved with an extreme degree of insolence; but our French servant, backed by the guide, compelled them to obey. As we returned at a very slow pace, owing to the sulkiness of the post-boys and the fatigue of the horses, we did not reach London till night-fall, when I immediately drove to Mr. Sheridan's house. He was extremely surprised to see me returned, and on my relating to him our adventure, agreed with me that it could not have been the result of mere chance!"

Can we not fancy the merry twinkle in Sheridan's brilliant eyes as Madame recounted her shouts and her terrors, the tiresome jolting along the muddy roads, while the two *élèves* put their pretty heads out of the carriage window and wondered what was coming next? The farce was not to end here. A justice of the peace was sent for, the post-boys were duly sworn, and confessed that an unknown gentleman had come in the morning to their master, and by giving them something to drink had persuaded them to take the wrong road. Sheridan, to keep up the joke, gravely informed Madame that there was sufficient ground to bring an action against these men, but it would be a tedious process and would cost a great deal of money. So, by his advice, the matter dropped. The result of his clever ruse was

that he brought Madame and her *élèves* down to his country place at Isleworth near Richmond, promising to escort them himself to Dover. But he put off going from day to day under pretence that he was too busy; it was not till he had enjoyed the society of the bewitching Pamela for a whole month, that he at length, together with his son and a Mr. Reid, accompanied the ladies to Dover.

"It was now," says Madame de Genlis, "the end of November 1792. The wind being adverse detained us for five days at Dover, during which time Mr. Sheridan remained with us. At last, the wind grew less unfavourable, but still blew so violently that nobody would advise us to embark. I resolved, however, to venture, and Mr. Sheridan attended us into the very packet boat, when I received his farewell with a feeling of sadness I cannot express."

From some additional recollections of Madame's, we learn that Sheridan was "passionately in love with Pamela." "Two days before we set out," says the gouvernante, "Mr. Sheridan made in my presence his declaration of love to Pamela, who was affected by his agreeable manner and high character, and accepted the offer of his hand with pleasure. In consequence of this, it was settled that he was to marry her on our return from France, which was expected to take place in a fortnight."

We all know that a very different fate awaited Pamela. Her "*futur*" was then at Paris, lodging with Tom Paine, and full of ardour for the new doctrines of liberty and equality. He was among the English who attended the banquet at White's Hotel to celebrate the victories gained by the French armies, and drank a toast to the "speedy abolition of hereditary titles and feudal distinctions." For this offence he was dismissed from the English service, in which he held a commission as captain. Lord Edward was now twenty-nine, and is described as being "five feet seven inches in height, a very fine, elegantly formed man, with an interesting countenance, beautiful arched eyebrows, fine grey eyes, handsome nose and high forehead, thick dark-coloured hair, brown or inclining to black; as playful and humble as a child, as mild and timid as a lady, and, when necessary, as brave as a lion." He had seen active service already during the American War, and had assisted, under Lord Rawdon, at the relief of Fort Ninety-Six. His courage on that occasion amounted to recklessness: "He engaged two of the enemy's irregular horse single-handed, and had wounded one of them, when his sword broke in the middle." His fate would have been sealed only for the approach of the General's column. Wounded at Etnaw Spring, he forgot his own wound and offered to take charge of a wounded enemy. Another of his exploits was a journey from Frederickstown to Quebec with only

two companions. They accomplished the feat in twenty-six days, sleeping in the woods without any covering but their blanket-coats. Danger and adventure of all kinds were delightful to such a daring spirit; he loved the savage life of the backwoods, and was actually made a chief of the Bear Tribe by the chief of the Six Nations.

Among his other peculiarities was a dangerous facility for falling in love. He had already had two *grandes passions:* first for Lady Catherine Meade (whom he always called "pretty Kate"), second daughter of Lord Clanwilliam, and afterwards for a certain G——. "Dearest G——, I can never love anybody," he writes, "as I do her; with her I can find no fault; it is not possible to be happy with any one else," &c. But G—— proved faithless and married some one else just as he was returning in high spirits from the silver mines of America, full of joy at the thought of seeing her again. His heart, like that of Romeo, after his first disappointment, was now caught at the rebound. At one of the Paris theatres, Moore tells us, he saw a face, through a *loge grillée* near him, which struck him at once, not only from its own peculiar beauty, but also from its strange likeness to a lady some months dead. We have no difficulty in guessing this lady to have been Mrs. Sheridan. Lord Edward found that she was no other than that very Pamela of whom he had heard so much, and whom he had resolutely refused to meet. Away went all his prejudices against learned ladies; he was introduced by an Englishman, Mr. Stone, and was never absent from Pamela's side. "I dine to-day," he writes to his mother, "with Madame Sillery," for so Madame de Genlis was then called. Madame Sillery, on her part, was delighted to welcome this son of a duke: he could give Pamela that rank and position which had slipped from the gouvernante's hands, and which she coveted for her daughter. Lord Edward was not rich certainly, his income was never more than £800 a year, and Pamela had only her 1500 livres, but then they were both rich in love and hope and youth. All must go well. "I am always disagreeable," writes Lord Edward in his G—— days, "when I am in love." His courtship now was very short; the first meeting took place the end of November, and during the first days of December the party migrated to Tournay. Three weeks afterwards Lord Edward's marriage with Pamela took place, the contract being witnessed, amongst others, by Philippe Egalité. Pamela appears as "Citoyenne Anne Caroline Stéphanie Sims, connue en France sous la nomme de Pamela, native de Fogo dans l'île de Terreneuve, fille de Guillaume de Brixey et de Mary Sims." Here is a new paternity due to Madame la gouvernante's inventive faculty, but in the Irish papers of that date, among the marriage announcements, we find, "The Right Hon. Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Madame

Pamela Capet, daughter of his Royal Highness the ci-devant Duke of Orleans." The bridegroom had written to ask for his mother's consent, but had not waited for her reply. On the 2nd January, 1793, he and his bride of nineteen arrived in London, and he wrote to the Dowager Duchess of Leinster as follows:

"DEAREST MOTHER,—Thank you a thousand times for your letter, you never obliged me so much or made me so happy. I cannot tell you how strongly my little wife feels it. She has sent your letter to Madame Sillery, whom I know it would delight. She is to be pitied, for she dotes on Pamela, who returns it most sincerely. What she feels is the only drawback to my happiness. You must love her: she wants to be loved."

After remaining about three weeks with the Dowager Duchess (who was married to Mr. Ogilvie), the young couple proceeded to Dublin, and their arrival is announced in an Irish paper of the 26th of January as follows: "Yesterday morning arrived the Princess Royal, Captain Browne, from Park Gate, with the Right Hon. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, his lady and suite, and several other persons of quality." The Irish House of Commons was then sitting, and Lord Edward had hurried back to take his seat for Kildare, with all his new enthusiasm for French liberty strong upon him. His disposition always led him to take the losing side and to cast his lot in with the oppressed against the oppressors. Oppression was not then, as it is to-day, a mere empty sound, used for the purposes of agitation; grievances did really then press heavily on many classes of the community, which have long since been removed. They stirred Lord Edward's chivalrous soul to the very centre. Into the stormy sea of Irish politics we shall not enter, we propose rather to give a bird's-eye view of the domestic life led by Pamela and her husband. We may, however, allude to Lord Edward's historical speech of the 31st of January. It was then that, in order to put down armed meetings, an address to the Lord Lieutenant was proposed, and Lord Edward starting from his seat, rose and said: "Sir, I give my most hearty disapprobation to this address, for I do think that the Lord Lieutenant and the majority of this House are the worst subjects the King has." No persuasions would induce this stubborn son of the Geraldines to retract his words: he stood to his guns. "I said so, 'tis true, and I'm sorry for it," was all that could be got out of him. Meantime Dublin was very gay—a great many balls, of which Pamela missed none. Every one was curious to see her—she was so French, so *spirituelle*, and such a dancer!

"Dancing is a great passion with her," writes her admiring husband to his mother; "I wish you could see her dance, you would be delighted with her, she dances so with all her heart and soul. Everybody seems

to like her and to behave civilly and kindly to her. There was a kind of something about visiting Lady Leitrim, but it is all over now. We dined there on Sunday; she was quite pleasant. Pamela likes her very much. My differing with the people that I am unavoidably obliged to live with, does not add much to the agreeableness of Dublin society. But I have followed my dear mother's advice and do not talk much on the subject. I keep very quiet, and do not go out much except to see my wife dance—in short, keep my breath to cool my porridge."

When Lord Edward first arrived from England, he lived in some degree of style, kept a fine stud of horses, and was the first person who sported a curricle in Dublin. In the Recollections of Mrs. Anstice O'Byrne, given by Mr. J. W. Fitzpatrick in 'The Sham Squire,' she relates having seen Lord Edward seated in a very high phaeton with the beautiful Pamela beside him. He held the reins, and was driving at a very dashing pace through College Green and Dame Street in the direction of the Castle. Having only just brought Pamela home as his bride from France, she shared with him the plaudits of the people. Mrs. O'Byrne could only say that Pamela was beautiful, without any particulars, but she vividly described Lord Edward as a smart, light, dapper-looking man with boyish features, which beamed with delight at the cheers of the multitude and the admiration excited by the beauty of Pamela. Lord Edward's green tabinet kerchief, tied round his neck with large bows, and very conspicuous-looking, especially dwelt in the old lady's memory. Pamela loved applause and society, but Lord Edward often longed for the quiet of the country. As April drew on, he thought of the county Wicklow: "Why not choose a pretty spot and a pretty country," he writes. "I do like mountains and rocks, and pretty views, and pretty hedges and pretty cabins. I own also that I do not like to be Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the county Kildare member,—to be bored with 'this is your brother's friend,' and 'this one voted for him,'" &c.

But the county Wicklow plain was abandoned, and in May the young couple settled at Frescati, a villa at Black Rock, which belonged to the Duchess Dowager of Leinster. There is hardly a prettier little idyllic picture to be found than in Lord Edward's description of it in a letter to his mother:

"Wife and I are come to settle here. We came last night, got up on a beautiful spring day, and are now enjoying the little book-room with the windows open, hearing the birds sing, and everything looking beautiful. Pamela has dressed four beautiful flower-pots, and is now working at her frame while I write to my dearest mother. Upon the two little stands there are six pots of auriculas, and I am sitting in the bow-window with all those pleasant feelings which the fine weather, the pretty place, the singing birds, the pretty wife, and Frescati give . . . The letter was interrupted by my dear wife being taken ill; she is now much better and is going on as well as possible. She has not kept her bed, by the doctor's advice, but

lies on the couch in the book-room. I was frightened a great deal the first day at her weakness, but she is much stronger to-day and I feel quite comfortable about her. Not to be far from her, I am amusing myself dressing the little beds about the house, and have had the little green mowed and rolled; the little mound of earth before the house I have planted with tufts of gentianellas and primroses, and lily-of-the-valley, and they look beautiful peeping out of the dark evergreens. I mean to keep it all as neat as possible while I am here."

The letter ends as follows:

"The dear little, pale, pretty wife sends her love."

We are struck in his letters by Lord Edward's wonderful superabundance of life and *gaieté de cœur*, he is delighted with those things which strike his fancy; he has an immense faculty for loving—for admiring—and also for "gaeing his own gait." After his removal to the little lodge at Kildare, he reduced his establishment, and lived frugally till his connection with the United Irishmen made large demands on his purse and encumbered him with debts. Tony, his faithful black servant, who had saved his life in America by carrying him when he was wounded to his hut, always remained his major-domo. Dublin never suited him; he confesses when he is there, that Leinster House does not inspire the brightest ideas.

"What a melancholy house it is!" he adds. "You cannot conceive how much it appeared so when first we came from Kildare, but it is going off a little. A poor country housemaid I brought with me, cried for two days and said she thought she was in prison. Pam and I amuse ourselves by walking about the streets, which I believe shocks poor —— a little. Pam is going on as well as possible—strong, healthy, and in good spirits. We drive and walk every day. She never thinks of what is to come, I believe, or if she does, it is with good courage—in short, I never saw her, I think, in such good spirits. Seeing her thus, makes me so, and I feel happy and look forward with good hope. Thank God! I generally see things in the best light."

And then there is a mention of the little young plant that is coming, "which will give us great pleasure, I hope." In October the little plant came, and "the dear wife and baby are going on as well as possible," writes the lover-husband. "It is a dear little thing and very pretty, though at first it was quite the contrary—nothing is so delightful as to see it in its dear mother's arms, with her sweet pale delicate face, and the pretty looks she gives it." There was as usual some dispute as to who the little stranger was like. "I do not see much likeness in him to anybody," writes the father: "he has Pam's chin, the eyes blue, but not like either of ours. . . ." A little later, and dear Pam and the baby are sent to Kildare. "Pam gets strong and the little fellow fat and saucy. A

cradle he don't like, and wants always to have his cheek on his mother's breast; he every day grows, I think, more like me in the mouth and nose, but the eyes I don't yet make out . . ." One more extract—it is the last glimpse we get of Lord Edward's halcyon days.

"I have got all my beds ready for my flowers, so you may guess how I long to plant them. I think when I am down there [at Kildare] with Pam and the child, of a blustery evening, with a good turf fire and a pleasant book, coming in after seeing my poultry put up, my garden settled, flower-beds and plants covered for fear of frost, the place looking comfortable and taken care of, I shall be as happy as possible."

Alas! he did not then see the thickening of conspiracy; he did not imagine that in less than four years he would be flying like a culprit, taking refuge where he could find it, and meeting at last with a disastrous and tragical death. At the beginning of the year 1796, Lord Edward had not joined the Society of United Irishmen, though his views were every day veering more and more in that direction. One of his favourite companions was Arthur O'Connor, a leading member of the insurgents, and it was in company with him that Lord Edward rode one day to the Curragh races. He wore a green silk neckerchief, and some officers who were riding by, suddenly wheeled round and ordered Lord Edward to take off his green cravat. Lord Edward coolly answered, "Let any man who *dares*, come and take it off." Overawed by the spirit that flashed in the eyes of the dauntless Geraldine, the officers rode away without saying another word. At a Curragh ball soon afterwards, every lady in the room declined to dance with them. Such incidents as these, together with the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, which blasted the hopes of the Liberal party, decided Lord Edward on taking the momentous step, and becoming an avowed member of the United Irishmen. He did not do things by halves; his friends well knew his stubborn disposition; and he now threw himself into the movement with all his usual energy and strength of will. He was received by his new brethren with open arms. Not only did he belong to the most illustrious family in Ireland, not only was he the son and brother of a duke, but he had what his companions most needed,—a practical knowledge of military affairs. He was henceforth their military leader, and to him was entrusted the secret organisation of the insurgent forces, which are said, at one time, to have numbered upwards of 300,000 men. French aid had been promised, and a trusty agent was necessary to enter into a formal treaty with the French Directory. For this difficult task Lord Edward was chosen, and, accompanied by Pamela and Arthur O'Connor, he set out for Hamburg. Pamela, being near her confinement, was left at Hamburg, while the other two went on

to Basle. The French Government, however, objected to receive Lord Edward lest an idea should get abroad, from his having married Pamela, that his mission had some reference to the Orleans family. To O'Connor, therefore, was left the delicate business of the treaty, but unluckily on Lord Edward's return to Hamburg, he had as travelling companion a foreign lady who had been rather too intimate with a colleague of Mr. Pitt. To this lady Lord Edward, with his usual frankness, confided his opinions and plans, all of which the female spy lost no time in transmitting to her friend in power. Meantime, Madame de Genlis had not forgotten her former *élève*. She went to see Pamela and her husband while they were at Hamburg.

"I discovered," she says, "that Lord Edward had very exaggerated ideas on the subject of political liberty and against his Government. I suspected that he was embarking in affairs of danger. I spoke about it to Pamela, advising her to exert her influence over him to dissuade him from his purpose. She made a reply which is worthy of being repeated: she told me that she had imposed on herself a law, never to ask him any questions on such affairs, for which she had two reasons—the first was that she knew in such matters she would have no power to change his determination; and the second was that if things turned out badly, and that if she were interrogated by the authorities, she should always be able to take a Bible oath that she knew nothing about it, and thus that she would not be in the painful alternative of either denouncing him or taking a false oath" ('Mémoires de Madame de Genlis,' vol. iv. p. 274).

The same view is taken by the modest, "*spirituelle* and sage Olympe." Under this name Madame de Genlis wrote imaginary letters to illustrate Pamela's peculiar mode of thinking, and gave her the name of Madame Olympe D——.

"Married within the last three years," she says, "I maintain an absolute silence on all public affairs. This reserve costs me little, because it seems to me that it is God alone who can tell us surely which is the most perfect of all governments. If it is difficult to guide and direct one child, how great is the difficulty, then, to govern twenty-five millions of men."

Pamela was, however, unjustly suspected of mixing herself up with her husband's plans. She may have known something about them, but she certainly did not suggest them. Her daughter, called after herself, was born at Hamburg; and by the time the little party returned to Ireland, events had thickened rapidly. On the 15th of December, 1796, the French fleet, making in all forty-three sail, set out from Brest, and though Hoche found it impossible to land at Bantry Bay owing to the tremendous gale, still the panic in Ireland was universal, and Pamela was in terror lest her husband should be punished for the invasion. She could not even name the subject without agony. He had now fairly crossed the Rubicon and was the hero and idol

of his party. Moore, when a college boy, once saw him in Grafton Street, and ran anxiously after him to get another look. "His peculiar dress, the elastic lightness of his step, his fresh healthful complexion, and the soft expression given to his eyes by their long black eyelashes," made an impression on the young poet that he never could forget. But Lord Edward was a doomed man, for his knowledge of military matters made him specially dangerous to the Government. On the 12th of March the arrests at Bond's were made, and in the same month Leinster House was searched by a party of soldiers under Major O'Kelly. When Pamela, who was ill, was told of their arrival, she said directly, "There is no help. Send them up." They asked very civilly for her papers and those of her husband, and she gave them *all*. Her distress moved Major O'Kelly to *tears*; he left her and soon returned to say, "Madam, we wish to tell you that our search is in vain. Lord Edward has escaped." Pamela gave such a "fair, meek and pitiable" account of this scene that she gained Lady Louisa Connolly's good opinion for ever. She was charged not to mention her husband's name, not to give a soul a hint where he was, but to stay on at Leinster House, seeing everybody that called and keeping strict silence on dangerous topics. Soon afterwards she recovered her spirits in so sudden a manner that everybody was convinced she knew where her husband was; but still her position was full of danger and humiliation; she found herself isolated among her husband's relations, who all blamed his folly and deplored his politics. His aunt, Lady Sarah Napier, sent Pamela £20, but with some spirit she returned it and said she had plenty of money and was going to take a house away from Leinster House, which had grown detestable to her. The house was taken at Denzille Street, and Pamela brought only two servants with her—an attached maid-servant and her husband's black favourite, Tony. It was generally thought that Lord Edward had escaped to France, and the maid-servant was considerably surprised in going into her mistress's room late one evening, to find Pamela and her husband sitting together by the light of the fire. The younger child, the little girl, had been at his desire brought down out of its bed for him to see it, and both he and Pamela were, so the maid thought, in tears.* This was not the last time that Lord Edward visited Denzille Street. In April whilst he was concealed at his last hiding-place in the house of a feather-merchant called Murphy, he stole out dressed in woman's clothes and, attended by Murphy, arrived at his wife's abode. "Some friend being with her at the time, the servant came to say that there was a lady in the parlour waiting to see her, and when she discovered who it was and that he meant to remain all

* Moore's 'Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald,' vol. ii. p. 161.

night, her alarm at his danger, and anxiety about his return, brought on a premature confinement, and her second daughter, Lucy, was born."

From Murphy's to Cormick's, and back to Murphy's again, Lord Edward was hurried—a reward of £1000 being offered for him,—now he eluded detection as a sheep-drover, now in a pig-tailed wig, now in a lady's night-dress, with medicine bottles beside the bed. But the pitcher which goes often to the well gets broken at last, and so it proved with him. On the evening of the 18th of May, he was surprised at Murphy's house by Ryan and Swan; "jumping like a tiger" from the bed, he gave and received wounds, till Major Sirr, coming in, shot him in the shoulder, and he was conveyed to the Castle in a sedan-chair and afterwards brought to Newgate. When he was asked if he had any message for his wife, he answered, "No—no—thank you . . . nothing—nothing—only break it to her tenderly." She was then at Moira House, and Miss Napier went for her, and made some foolish pretence to bring her home. She was told next morning of the arrest, and she bore it better than could have been expected, though her head seemed still deranged. It was soon decided that she was to leave the country. "When I brought her the passport," says Lady Louisa Connolly, "it threw her into sad distress, for she had hoped I could prevail upon them to let her live in the prison." This was strictly forbidden; the Privy Council had ordered her to England. Lord Edward was not to see his friends at all—she was no use anywhere.

So at five o'clock on a May morning poor, pretty Pamela and her children sailed from Dublin, never more to return. She was like a good child and did exactly as she was told,—she had nothing of Lady Nithsdale about her. Though the words "intrepid," "noble," "elevated," "great," are sometimes applied to her, it is certain that she never showed any traces of elevation or grandeur; she was "dear little interesting Pamela," a "charming creature," one of those women whose nature it is to cling and be supported, and who at the harsh touch of adversity crouch helplessly into a corner. "Uneven in strength of body or mind," says Lady Sarah Napier, "Pamela sinks or rises suddenly with illness or affections. She launches out into almost ravings from her lively imagination, sees things in too strong lights; cannot bear violent checks; but is soothed into reason by tenderness with ease." When it was known that she had left Ireland while her husband lay almost in his death-throes, she became extremely unpopular. "The common people," writes Lady Louisa Connolly, "have imbibed prejudices against her—poor little soul!—to a degree that is quite horrible."

As May ripened into June Lord Edward sank under his wounds,

He raved about militia and numbers; yet in the midst of his delirium he managed to say, with his usual thought for others, "How is poor Murphy's face?" (Murphy had been wounded on the evening of the arrest.) When all hope was over, Lord Edward's brother Henry was allowed to visit him, and mentioned that he had seen Pamela on board. "And the children too?" said Lord Edward—"she is a charming woman!" and then became silent again. Was he thinking of the quiet days at Frescati, of the auriculas in blossom, and of the dear, pretty, pale little wife that was now far distant from him? Yet even to the very end he would not own that he had been mistaken. When a former brother officer came to see him, and spoke of the other wound that he had had in America, Lord Edward said, "Ah! I was wounded then in a very different cause—that was fighting against liberty, this is in fighting *for* it." It was always the same: there was no double-dealing about him, he had something of the *preux chevalier* of ancient days in his composition, brave in war and tender in love. Death on a battle-field would have suited him better than lingering torture on the dirty pallet-bed of a gloomy prison, with a male attendant from a lunatic asylum to wait on him, and the dying groans of Clinch, who was hung outside the prison, in his ears.

Pamela was of course in agonies of grief when the fatal news arrived; violent hysterics came on; she "mistook the Duke of Leinster for Edward," says the Duke of Richmond to his brother-in-law, "and you may imagine how cruel a scene it was." Her people-in-law lavished kindness on her; she spent some time at Goodwood, and everybody praised her propriety and good sense—yet still her husband's relations agreed that she was a "character," and she must have felt a certain amount of *gêne* with them. By the attainder of her husband's property she was, besides, left almost penniless, and the unpopularity which she endured in Dublin was extended to her in England. "I pity her from my soul," writes Lady Sarah Napier. "A stranger, an orphan herself, lovely in her appearance, persecuted, ruined, banished." The Leinster family were not rich; the Duchess Dowager says, "We are too poor to give her any assistance, and I believe it is pretty much the case with the whole family." To avoid expense was therefore Pamela's first object; she was induced to go to Hamburg partly from the cheapness of living, and partly because Madame de Genlis' niece, Henrietta de Sercy, had married a rich banker, M. Mathiessen, and was settled in the environs of Hamburg. The beautiful young widow of twenty-five, accompanied by her pretty little daughter, soon found many admirers. Amongst them was the American consul, Mr. Pitcairn, and after some time Pamela consented to marry him.

By this marriage she had one child, a daughter, but she soon found

that commonplace, middle-aged Mr. Pitcairn was very different from handsome, enthusiastic Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Humdrum matrimonial *têtes-à-tête* did not suit this whimsical little being, and she soon resolved to escape from them. The old romantic affection did not now exist between her and Madame de Genlis. Soon after Pamela arrived at Hamburg, Madame wrote to beg her to come and take up her abode with her at Berlin, but Pamela flatly refused to do so. In 1804, Madame paid a visit to Hamburg to her niece, and Pamela was among the persons who went with her as far as Harbourg. A coldness had however sprung up between the two; there were no more poetical tributes, no more dedications to "ma chère enfant." Shortly afterwards, Pamela and her second husband separated by mutual consent, and the next time we hear of this flighty little lady she is at Dover. Here is Madame's account of the meeting between Pamela and Casimir (the youngest of the "gouvernante's" adopted children):

"On his way back to France, Casimir found Pamela at Dover. She was stopping at the hotel he went to, and the evening of his arrival she sent to beg him to go to her; he went, and found her bathed in tears. She told him that she was pursued by creditors, who would arrest her and compel her to return to London, where she would be recognised by other creditors and involved in frightful embarrassments, but that she could be rid of these dreadful fears and pressing misfortunes if he would on the spot pay for her fifty louis, French money, and if he would enable her secretly in the night to get on board the vessel of the Prince Esterhazy (the Prince having hired a mail boat expressly for himself). Casimir at once handed over to the creditors fifty louis; he obtained with a great deal of trouble the permission she desired, and he conducted her himself, in the middle of the night, on board the packet, where he hid her in the hold of the vessel, as she was in mortal fear of being overtaken by new creditors. Casimir," adds Madame, "came post haste from Calais to Paris, to apprise me of the arrival of Pamela, to whom I had written to conjure her to go back to Hamburg with her husband, Mr. Pitcairn, reminding her that she had a daughter who was with him, and who had a right to her care. Notwithstanding all my exhortations, she came—*raisons d'intérêt*, plausible enough, decided her on taking this step. Casimir begged me as a favour to receive her into the Arsenal, and to give her his room, saying that he would be satisfied to sleep in the sitting-room on a stretcher-bed. I made her an offer to do so, that is to lodge her, her daughter the interesting Pamela, daughter of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and a young lady, her companion, and to support them. I added only one condition to these proposals, which was that Pamela should see no persons except those of my acquaintance. She refused all these offers. I then used every effort to persuade her to take a small lodging near me at the Palais Royal, telling her the lodgings were very pleasant and reasonable; that she could easily walk every day from them and dine with me, so that her expenses would be very little. She refused likewise this offer" ('Mémoires de Madame de Genlis,' vol. v. pp. 223–4–5).

Pamela, it seems, left Paris in a huff without taking leave of

Madame de Genlis. When she again returned, she wrote, on her arrival, a very affectionate and touching letter, asking permission to go and see Madame, who replied that Pamela had decidedly done wrong in leaving Paris without bidding her adieu, and in not having written since, but that "were I ever to shut my door against her, the door would open of its own accord at sight of her." Pamela, therefore, came frequently to see the gouvernante. Some little friendly explanations took place, says Madame, "which were sweet when they proceeded from her mouth; she is so amiable, she has so much natural goodness of heart, that it is impossible to preserve for any length of time any angry feelings against her." Just about this period of Pamela's life, we catch a very interesting glimpse of her from the recollection of Madame la Baronne d'E——, as given by Dr. Madden in his 'Lives of the United Irishmen.' This account has all the truth and accuracy of a photograph; here we seem to see the real Pamela—not idealised, but as she actually was.

"The first time that I saw Pamela," says the Baroness, "it was, I think, in 1816 or 1817, at Madame de Genlis', who lived at that time in the Rue St. Anne, No. 17. I was a very little girl then, but I remember that her beauty struck me forcibly; in after-years I could more fully appreciate that beauty, that charm, and that influence she exerted over all who saw her. Her nose, her eyes, her eyebrows, her forehead were the most remarkable of her features; her mouth was not so good, and she spoilt it still more by an ugly habit she had of biting her lips; her teeth were small and white, her figure charming, but as she advanced in life she became enormously large—her face, however, continued always beautiful. She had one very rare attraction, that of increasing her beauty when she laughed. Her regard, which was sometimes sprightly and brilliant, became easily tender and languishing, like that of a person who has suffered much and is thinking of it. Her character was very capricious, like that of Madame de Genlis, but she was withal more cheerful, with a great deal of childishness. She amused herself with everything, and was easily diverted even when she had occasional fits of melancholy, which often lasted for many hours together. She was very abstemious: tea was her principal nourishment; she used to call it the consolation of the heart, of the mind, and of the stomach. She had very little instruction, very little solidity of mind (*son esprit était légère*), but she was often very original, which made people think that she was more *spirituelle* than she really was. She recounted very well what she had seen. Inconsistent, superficial, and unfortunately not very sincere, it was difficult, particularly for a woman, to make of her a true friend; capricious rather than ill-disposed, she knew, however, how to make enemies for herself. She was generous and fond of giving away, and only stopped spending when money failed her altogether, which frequently happened to her, having no knowledge whatever of money matters. She was very diligent; drawing was her principal occupation. At the time that she had only a very small pension sent her from England, she sold her drawings. She was fond of dress and knew how to arrange it with taste, and no one would have had more than herself if her fortune had allowed her. Her strange and *artistique*

head-dress became her well; it consisted when she was at home of an Indian handkerchief of bright and showy colours, the border of which encircled her forehead a little above the eyebrows, and the rest of it was twisted like a turban round the head; two little locks of hair formed the crochet which ornamented the temples. In a cap, with her hair in paper, the face of Pamela no longer appeared the same, and even lost all air of distinction. In a bonnet she looked better; but in a turban she triumphed, and she well knew that. I have scarcely ever seen her simply in her hair. The only great imperfection in her person was her hands, which were large, long, with a thick skin, though tolerably white; one might say they were masculine hands. She used to say very gaily that she had done everything in the world to beautify *ses pattes* without succeeding. Her feet were very pretty, her skin dazzling. She danced wonderfully well, and had a marvellous art of imitation in every style, which rendered her often very amusing. At home, no one was more amiable than she was or received her visitors with a better grace; there, one might see men of the highest class: she was not so fond of women, and had very little acquaintance with them. She was by turns a lady of rank, an artist, a good child full of grace, a coquette, saying pleasing things with an expression of countenance so charming that it is impossible to describe it; and, notwithstanding all her faults, the most irresistible being that ever lived. She knew well how to give her modest little *salon* an air of comfort which is rarely to be met with in the sumptuous apartments of the wealthy, and one can easily understand the fascinations she exercised over the men who surrounded her, and the admiration with which she inspired them."

After staying some time at Paris, Pamela retired to a country *château* belonging to the Duc de la Force at Montaubon. Her daughter Pamela had been taken from her at the age of twelve, and was brought up by Lady Sophia Fitzgerald, so the flighty little lady was left entirely to her own devices for eighteen years. Madame la Baronne d'E—— goes on to tell us that

"Pamela was forty-seven years of age when during the summer, on a visit to my father's country mansion at Orléannais, she danced the entire night at a ball given by my mother. She was dressed in white muslin, with a wreath of white roses; she looked only twenty years old, and an Englishman, a Captain P——, who resided with his sister in a mansion near ours, became desperately enamoured of her that night. This passion, which never went beyond a *coquetterie de salon*, often caused us a visit from the captain for nearly six months: he was a perfect gentleman, full of wit and distinction. At this time, Pamela was the intimate friend of the Comte de Pontecoulart, *ancien pair* of France; he was exceedingly in love with her, and I believe she often gave him cause to be jealous. She had an innate coquetry, and no one ever made her acquaintance that she did not use her arts to please. I must, however, say for her justification that this desire to please extended to both sexes, to all ages and conditions. I heard the Duc de la Force replying to my mother, who questioned him at the close of Pamela's life, and asked, 'Well, is Pamela still a coquette?' 'More than ever,' he answered, laughing: 'at Montaubon, in my *château*,

where we never see anybody, she gives herself the air of a coquette with the gardener!"

While vegetating at Montaubon, Pamela paid frequent visits to Paris, and was still admired and sought after; brilliant in society, her conversation was always remarkable for a liveliness and playfulness, which gave her repartees the resemblance of wit. In the *salon* of the Comtesse de Balbi, where mediocrity could not gain admittance, Pamela was the life and soul of the company. She was often kind to the poor, and was long remembered in the cottages about Montaubon. Yet here and there in her life came at times something resembling a sigh.

In 1830, a lady dressed completely in black, came to the house of Barrère, and announced herself as Pamela's lady's-maid. When she appeared before Barrère, he said to her, "You are in the employment of a person for whom I have always had an esteem; give me some news of her—is she happy?"

"Alas! no," replied the visitor, "she is not happy."

"I should like very much to see Pamela, that good Pamela," continued Barrère, whilst looking at his visitor with a scrutinising glance; "tell her, madam, that I have carefully preserved her portrait, and that I carried it away with me in my exile."

"You have her portrait?" exclaimed the stranger. "Oh, sir, let me see it!"

When the portrait was shown to her, she could no longer restrain the feelings that the sight of that portrait excited; the feelings of the woman burst out in the words, "Ah! mon Dieu, comme j'étais jolie!"

"It is you then, Pamela!" said Barrère, "you need no longer attempt to conceal yourself" (she was then in her wane, still attractive, but no longer the beautiful sylph-like Pamela of former days).

"Yes," she replied; "in my anxiety to see you once more, I determined on this visit, and in the guise in which you see me. Ah! I am sure you find me much changed, do you not? Alas! I have suffered much; at some other time I will relate all that to you."

Then seizing on the portrait which Barrère had been showing to her, she exclaimed, with great vivacity, "Give it, give it to me! I want to go immediately and show it to one of my friends."

She then went away, with tears in her eyes, after having pressed the hand of Barrère, who never saw her again.*

Changes had indeed come to Pamela. Madame de Genlis was dead, and in spite of her protestations of affection, had not left her adopted daughter a single sou. In 1831, Pamela came to Paris, and tem-

* Condensed from 'L'Histoire de Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans.' Par M. Tournois, vol. ii. pp. 394-396.

porarily settled herself at the Hôtel du Danube, Rue Richepanse, No. 7. The Duc de la Force accompanied her, and it was here that she was taken with the illness of which she died. Madame Ducrest came to see her, and Pamela begged that she would not leave her. After a visit from M. l'Abbé de la Madeleine, Pamela refused to see the Duke, and insisted upon his leaving the hotel, which he did, and took lodgings in the Rue de Rivoli. By the help of "Sister Ursula," Madame Ducrest* nursed poor Pamela for some time. At last, Sister Ursula examined Pamela's features, and said calmly, "At midnight all will be over." It was then six o'clock.

"Quite absorbed with grief," says Madame Ducrest, "the time flew rapidly away, without my calculating that but a few minutes remained when I should still hear that sweet voice. I was suddenly drawn from this reverie by hearing Sister Ursula begin to recite the prayers for the departing soul. The sufferer even then replied aloud, insensibly her voice became broken and feeble, then unintelligible, and at length the words from her lips ceased altogether. Her looks still expressed her lively and confiding faith. Very soon her eyes, which were raised to Heaven, grew dull, her hands grasped convulsively the crucifix which she held, and in a few instants she was no more. We remained stupefied with the irreparable loss . . . ."

Not far from the Rue Richepanse, where Pamela breathed her last, was that Palais Royal where she had been taken as a child, and had been taught by her crafty gouvernante to throw herself into artistic poses, and to attract admiration by her graceful attitudes and dramatic gestures. To this ruinous system of education we must attribute many of Pamela's faults, her love for attracting notice, and her restless, disturbed nature. But she was entirely free from her mother's vice of deceit, she always remained frank and genuine to the last. Once the idol of an adoring husband, then thrown amongst aristocratic relations who could not understand her ardent temperament, and again, cast—beautiful, attractive and almost penniless—amongst a host of so-called friends who were always ready to cast the first stone at her—is it any wonder that under such circumstances she made grievous blunders in life? She had so little thought for herself that, at her death, only a hundred francs were forthcoming, and two applications for pecuniary aid had to be made: one to Madame Adelaide, her former companion, who paid the expenses of her funeral; and another to Mr. Pitcairn, her second husband, who sent money to defray her debts. Among the friends who came to inquire for Pamela during her last

* Madame Georgette Ducrest, niece of Madame de Genlis. She was left with a very moderate income, and Pamela forced her to accept three hundred francs every year to defray the expenses of her daughter's education.—'Mémoires de l'Impératrice Joséphine,' p. 27.

illness was a man advanced in years, with a kind expression of countenance and a gentle voice.

"Not knowing who he was," says Madame Ducrest," on one occasion I asked him his name, which he refused to tell me. I spoke of him to Pamela, but she could not enlighten me on the subject—she could not even imagine who he could be. The day after her death, this same gentleman came, and upon hearing the sad news, he burst into tears. 'Madame,' he said, 'when you know who I am, and speak to people about me, you will hear, no doubt, a great deal that is bad of me. You may tell them who speak of me that you know I have feeling, at least, to shed tears for the death of an old friend who had chosen me for her guardian. My name, Madame, is Barrère!"

An Australian Poet.

The repeated visits of Australian cricketers to these shores, their scientific skill at the game, and their judiciously aggressive behaviour, have done much to dispel the midnight gloom of ignorance that formerly prevailed, especially in the provincial mind of England, concerning the antipodes. The recent attempt on the part of Queensland to annex New Guinea, is another "bold advertisement" which has been well followed up by the more extensive request that all the Western Pacific Islands be attached to the Australian dependencies of the British Crown.

It has occurred to me that some of the good people in England who have been aroused by these sensational proceedings to take some passing interest in Australia might peruse a few pages in an English magazine on the subject of an Australian poet.

Those who have the privilege of the acquaintance of the one or two distinguished English *littérateurs*, such as Mr. R. H. Horne and Mr. Alfred Domett, who have lived in Australia or New Zealand, may have heard those gentlemen speak not without appreciation of certain antipodean authors and artists, but the majority of even cultured Englishmen appear to be quite ignorant of the existence of a native literature and art—or at least of its vigorous beginnings—in those colonies. Yet at the present time when English statesmen seem quite in the dark as to the political aims of Australasia, or the dreaded results of the French *Récidiviste* Bill, it might be well if they would turn to the pages of Mr. Marcus Clarke's powerful colonial novel, 'His Natural Life,' in which the horrors of the Old English convict system of transportation are depicted with a power quite equal to anything in Charles Reade or Goboriau, and with a fidelity to facts and truthfulness of local colouring to which no European author could aspire. I will not detain the indulgent reader with further allusions to general colonial authorship, and only suffer what I have written on this head to remain, for fear it may be inferred that Adam Lindsay Gordon, the subject of this sketch, is the sole presentable representative of Australian literature. He is, in my opinion, the first of Australian poets, but there are at least two other colonial poets—Mr. J. Brunton Stephens of Queensland, and the late Henry Kendall of Sydney—who merit from the literary student an almost equal measure of attention.

"Like many an adventurous spirit," says a Melbourne critic, "Gordon came to these shores in early manhood, attracted by the prospect of making a rapid fortune, and of living the free congenial life of our pioneer days." He first tried sheep-farming in South Australia, but with disastrous results. "He lost his capital," writes Mr. Marcus Clarke, "and owning nothing but a love for horsemanship, and a head full of Browning and Shelley, plunged into the varied life which gold-mining, 'over-landing,' and cattle-driving affords. From this experience he emerged to light in Melbourne as the best amateur steeplechase rider in the colony." There is little to be told of his life in the Victorian metropolis. Among an essentially sporting community, he was far more famous as a horseman than as a poet. His tall, gaunt figure, and his superb steeplechase riding, became familiar to many colonials, especially to those with "horsey" tendencies. He published his verses, at first anonymously and always shyly, as though somewhat ashamed of them. His bush life probably intensified his natural habit of gloomy introspection; while he was a sceptic as to religious creeds, he had a strong yearning towards religious aspirations. Saving the occasional society of a bohemian journalist, or a trainer of horses, he was as solitary in the crowded streets of Melbourne as in the wild and lonely bush of *Australia felix;* probably he felt more so.

With all his energy and talents, he was in a worldly sense very unfortunate, and his Australian career affords a strange commentary on the letters which so frequently appear in London newspapers, counselling indiscriminate emigration. It may be maintained that Gordon's troubles sprang from his cultivation of the Muses; and here the average emigrant is not likely to follow his example. "Thou source of all my joy and all my woe," said poor Goldsmith apostrophising Poetry, and it is to be hoped that the writing of verses brought its solace as well as its sorrows to the soul of the unfortunate Australian poet. At all events he grew poorer and poorer, but was too sensitive to ask the assistance that many a sporting or literary admirer in Melbourne would have been glad to afford. At length he became tired of the struggle; and one evening, I think it was the evening of the very day on which his last volume of poems appeared, Adam Lindsay Gordon blew out his brains at Brighton, a marine suburb of Melbourne. This was in accordance with his cherished Pagan creed, that a man should know when the feast was over, that he should not linger at the festive board after the lights were out.

Gordon's first literary venture in the way of a volume was entitled 'Sea Spray and Smoke Drift,' which contains one or two poems now popular throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Among the contents of this volume are several poems which lack polish, and

some which are perhaps not worthy of a place; still it contains others which merit more than a mere passing reference, and 'Sea Spray and Smoke Drift,' despite its deficiencies, is felt to be a valuable addition to the literature of Australia. "Confiteor" is a fine poem—in spirit and in story essentially Byronic. It tells of a sin-stained corsair knight, who, having lost "her that he loved best," is too reckless to be shriven, or to listen patiently to priestly admonition, ere setting out on his adventurous voyage. Verse answers to verse, as the priest urges confession, and the knight bitterly retorts until his spiritual adviser himself confesses his own transgressions. These concluding verses may serve to give an idea of the poem, which is in all respects so characteristic of the poet:

[*Priest.*] "Dost suffer? Thy pain may be fraught with grace,
Since never by works alone
We are saved—the penitent thief may trace
The wealth of love in the Saviour's face
To the Pharisee rarely shown.
And the Magdalen's arms may yet embrace
The foot of the Jasper throne."

[*Knight.*] "Say, Priest! When the saint must vainly plead,
Oh, how shall the sinner fare?
I hold your comfort a broken reed,
Let the withered branch for itself take heed,
While the green shoots wait your care.
I've striven, though feebly, to grasp your creed,
And I've grappled my own despair."

[*Priest.*] "By the little within thee good and brave,
Not wholly shattered, though shaken,
By the soul that crieth beyond the grave,
The love that He once in His mercy gave
In His mercy since retaken,
I conjure thee, O sinner, pardon crave,
I implore thee, O sinner, waken!"

[*Knight.*] "Go to! shall I lay my black soul bare
To a vain, self-righteous man;
In my sin, in my sorrow you may not share,
And yet could I meet with one who must bear
The load of an equal ban;
With him I might strive to blend one prayer,
The wail of the Publican."

[*Priest.*] "My son! I too am a withered bough,
My place is to others given.
Thou hast sinned, thou sayest? I ask not how,
For I too have sinned even as thou,
And I too have feebly striven;
And with thee I must bow, crying 'Shrive us now,
Our Father which art in Heaven.'"

Most of Gordon's poems are singularly sombre in character, and seem to be tinged by the bitter reflections and dark forebodings that led to his own untimely end. They are filled too with a passionate agnosticism, as of one who cannot but hold that there is nothing beyond the grave, and that life itself is a mockery and a delusion, and yet clutches at any evidence of human love or heroism which seems to show that man is more than the beasts of the field. Such are the verses entitled, "Sunlight on the Sea," "The Song of the Surf," "Wormwood and Night-shade," "Quare Fatigasti;" while in the same volume are two fine ballads so thoroughly antique in spirit that the late Dante Gabriel Rosetti might have enjoyed them. These, with a translation from Horace and one from the Spanish, and, as might be expected from Gordon, a good sprinkling of sporting verses, make up the contents of 'Sea Spray and Smoke Drift.'

Gordon dedicated his second volume of poems, 'Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes,' to the late Major Whyte-Melville, in whom he found a fellow sportsman and brother poet of the turf. These dedicatory verses, though somewhat too Swinburnian in style, are singularly felicitous. It will be seen that he claims for his Muse an Australian habitat, and recognises that the source of his inspiration sprang from the land of his adoption rather than that of his birth.

"They are rhymes rudely strung, with intent less
Of sound than of words,
In lands where bright blossoms are scentless,
And songless bright birds.
Where with fire and fierce drought on her tresses,
Insatiable Summer oppresses,
Sere woodlands, and sad wildernesses,
And faint flocks and herds.

Where in dreariest days, when all dews end,
And all winds are warm,
Wild Winter's large floodgates are loosen'd,
And floods freed by storm;
From broken-up fountain-heads, dash on,
Dry deserts with long pent-up passion—
Here rhyme was first framed without fashion,
Song shaped without form.

Whence gathered?—the locusts' glad chirrup
May furnish a stave,
The ring of a rowel and stirrup,
The wash of a wave;
The chaunt of the marsh-frog in rushes
That chimes through the pauses and hushes
Of nightfall; the torrent that gushes;
The tempests that rave."

In this "Dedication" is the bright and vivid verse in which he so beautifully describes the Australian spring-time:

"In the Spring when the wattle-gold trembles,
'Twixt shadow and shine,
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine,
When the sky-line's blue burnisht resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,
Some song in all hearts hath existence,
Such songs have been mine."

The 'Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes,' as the title indicates, are more purely Australian in subject and character than his first volume. The opening poem, "The Sick Stock-rider," is a true picture drawn from his own experience of station life. Who that has lived at all in the "Bush" but feels the truth of every line in the manly and vigorous reminiscences of the dying stockman!

"'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass,
To wander as we wandered many a mile,
And blow the cool tobacco cloud and watch the white wreaths pass,
Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.
'Twas merry 'mid the black woods when we spied the station roofs,
To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
With a running fire of stockwhips, and fiery run of hoofs.
Oh, the hardest day was never then too hard!"

Lying on his bed of illness in enforced idleness how fondly he recals his rough comrades of the Bush:

"Aye, nearly all our comrades of the old colonial school,
Our ancient boon companions, Ned, are gone;
Hard livers for the most part, somewhat reckless as a rule,
It seems that you and I are left alone."

As I now write I can, in fancy, hear the delighted tones with which one of these "ancient boon companions" used to burst out in the crowded streets of Melbourne, to the astonishment of the passers-by, with what he called "Gordon's Epitaph on a Mutual Friend."

"And Carisbrooke the rider at the Horsefall broke his neck,
Faith! the wonder was he saved his neck so long."

The concluding lines of this thoroughly Australian poem are full of genuine feeling, and contain all a bushman's philosophy of life:

"For good undone, and gifts misspent, and resolutions vain,
'Tis somewhat late to trouble; this I know—
I should live the same life over if I had to live again;
And the chances are I go, where most men go.

The deep blue skies wax dusky, and the tall green trees grow dim,
The sward beneath me seems to heave and fall;
The sickly smoky shadows through the sleepy sunlight swim,
And on the very sun's face weave their pall.
Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead."

The "Sick Stock-rider" is by no means a highly polished production; but in all the essentials of true poetry, in pathos, intensity and vividness, it surely surpasses the æsthetic outpourings of those young gentlemen whose verses seem to express, not without a certain tricky cleverness, such a high opinion of themselves, and such a poor one of the rest of this universe.

Referring to this poem and others of its class, the poet's sympathetic friend and critic, Mr. Marcus Clarke, observed, "they are very like the beginnings of a National School of Australian poetry." Unfortunately no Australian poet since Gordon has lived a bush life. The youthful versifiers of Melbourne or Sydney know no more than Mr. Oscar Wilde of the mysteries of "branding cattle," or the delights of hunting kangaroos or bushrangers. They go for their inspiration to the spacious public libraries of the city, where they read much the same class of literature as studious young Englishmen do in the British Museum. Hence the world is becoming so monotonous: we all read the same books, think the same thoughts, listen to the same popular airs, dress in the same fashions. Collins Street, Melbourne, is only a copy of Regent Street; Bourke Street but a replica of the Strand. Adam Lindsay Gordon, on the contrary, had a distinct experience, and lived an unconventional life. He read too; for choice, he read Browning, Tennyson, and Swinburne. But the rough avocations of his daily life, the wild sports and solitary musings of the Bush, always formed the basis, and often furnished the themes of his poetry. The form may have been learned from these great English masters of the Lyre; but the spirit came to him in the weird silences of the Australian forest, and in those profoundly melancholy moments that throw a spell over the minds of cultured men whose lot is cast among rough and oft-times uncongenial comrades.

Of an entirely different character to the "Sick Stock-rider" is the remarkable poem which follows it, entitled "The Swimmer." The direct influence of Mr. Swinburne is here apparent; but it is no mere slavish imitation of that great master of metre and rhythm. The form and occasionally the trick of expression is identical, but the thoughts are not filched, nor the emotions mimicked. These have surged through the brain of the Australian bushman until, aided

doubtless by his study of the English bard, he gives them impassioned utterance in such verses as these:

"I would that with sleepy soft embraces
The Sea would fold me—would find me rest
In luminous shades of her secret places,
In depths where her marvels are manifest;
So the Earth beneath her should not discover
My hidden couch; nor the heav'n above her.
As a strong love shielding a weary lover,
I would have her shield me with shining breast."

"The Swimmer" is the cry of a strong but baffled soul for rest. He is weary of the stress and strife of this aimless existence; he has found out that life is a delusion, and that blessings are but curses in disguise. He has pondered deeply on life and on death, and can find no consolation save in the sad reflection that,

"Though the gifts of the light in the end are curses,
Yet bides the gift of the darkness—sleep."

In this mood he watches the angry waves, and then the old fever of the intrepid horseman seizes on him, and he yearns to bestride the steeds of Neptune, and ride he recks not whither, but haply to some haven of eternal quietude and rest. Surely this apostrophe to the ocean may be read even after Byron's:

"O! brave white horses! you gather and gallop,
The storm-sprite loosens the gusty reins,
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs or your high-arched manes.
I would ride you as never a man has ridden,
In your sleepy swirling surges hidden,
To gulfs foreshadowed, thro' straits forbidden,
Where no light wearies and no love wanes."

The genius of our Bush-bard is essentially lyric. Scattered among these vigorous ballads, and poems of a semi-dramatic character, are songs of a fine pathetic beauty. It is perhaps necessary to quote with some degree of fulness from a poet so completely unknown in England as Gordon, and so I venture to give his brief "Song of Autumn" as showing his tender grace as a lyric poet:

"'Where shall we go for our garlands glad
At the falling of the year;
When the burnt-up banks are yellow and sad,
When the boughs are yellow and sere?
Where are the old ones that once we had?
And when are the new ones near?
What shall we do for our garlands glad
At the falling of the year?'

"'Child! can I tell where the garlands go?
Can I say where the lost leaves veer?
On the brown-burnt banks when the wild winds blow,
When they drift through the deadwood drear.
Girl! when the garlands of next year glow,
You may gather again, my dear;
But *I* go when the last year's lost leaves go
At the falling of the year.'"

The 'Bush Ballads' contains by far the most popular of Australian poems, "How We Beat the Favourite." It is not by any means of the same high order of poetry as so much of Gordon's other work, but as a ballad of the turf it is to my mind the best in the language. At all events it is a prime favourite with antipodean reciters at "penny readings," and it may be confidently averred that a "horsey" poem that meets with the approval of an Australian "up-country" audience must be "racy" in more senses than one. Nor in the way of poetical translation do I know of anything to surpass Gordon's "Three Friends" from Alfred de Musset. It is the story of three knights who were sworn friends and comrades until they each fell in love with the same woman.

"We were three brethren in arms,
And sworn companions, we;
We held this motto: 'Whoso harms
The one, shall harm the three,'
Till, matchless for her subtle charms,
Beloved of each was she."

They quarrel and agree to fight to the death for her.

"The steel our quarrel first should try,
The poison should succeed;
For two of three were doomed to die,
And one was doomed to bleed"

In other words, the two first fight with their swords, and the victor and the remaining knight sit down to a feast, on the table being two beakers of wine one of which contains poison.

The survivor who thus causes the death of his two "friends" claims this fatal charmer, and there is a passionate verse describing his short-lived rapture. Then she flies from him and he stabs himself, and it is from his dying lips that the father-confessor hears the terrible story of the "Three Friends."

My prose summary of the story is so bald that I cannot refrain from quoting the concluding verses of this essentially French tragedy:

"On the dread verge of endless gloom
My soul recalls that hour;—
Skies languishing with balm of bloom,
And fields aflame with flower;
And slow caresses that consume,
And kisses that devour.

Ah! now with storm the day seems rife,
My dull ears catch the roll
Of thunder, and the far sea strife
On beach and bar and shoal—
I loved her better than my life,
And better than my soul.

She fled! I cannot prove her guilt;
Nor would I, an' I could,
See life for life is fairly spilt!
And blood is shed for blood.
Her white hands neither touched the hilt,
Nor yet the potion brew'd.

Aye! turn me from the sicky South
Toward the gusty North;
The fruits of sin are dust and drouth,
The end of crime is wrath—
The lips that pressed her rose-red mouth,
And choked with blood-red froth.

Then dig the grave-pit deep and wide.
Three graves thrown into one,
And lay three corpses side by side:
And tell their tale to none.
But bring her back in all her pride,
To see what she hath done."

Gordon's longest and most ambitious effort was 'Ashtaroth, a Dramatic Lyric.' It cannot be well denied that this drama is in many respects a crude work and that it bears too close a resemblance in its plot and supernatural mechanism to 'Faust' and 'Manfred.' One would be inclined to condemn it mercilessly, and regret that Gordon wasted so much time in its composition, only that he has scattered here and there throughout 'Ashtaroth' lyrics as beautiful as any he has written. Chief among these is the wail of the heroine, who has grown heartsick waiting for the return of her wild and gloomy lover:—

"We severed in Autumn early,
Ere the earth was torn by the plough;
The wheat and the oats and the barley,
Are ripe for the harvest now.
We sunder'd one misty morning,
Ere the hills were dimmed by the rain;
Through the flowers those hills adorning,
Thou comest not back again.

My heart is heavy and weary
With the weight of a weary soul;
The midday glare groweth dreary,
And dreary the midnight scroll;
The corn-stalks sigh for the sickle
'Neath the load of their golden grain;
I sigh for a mate more fickle—
Thou comest not back again.

The warm sun riseth and setteth,
The night bringeth moist'ning dew;
But the soul that longeth, forgetteth
The warmth and the moisture too.
In the hot sun rising and setting
There is nought save feverish pain;
There are tears in the night-dew's wetting—
Thou comest not back again.

Thy voice in mine ear still mingles
With the voices of whisp'ring trees;
Thy kiss on my cheek still tingles
At the kiss of the summer breeze;
While dreams of the past are thronging
For substance of shades in vain.
I am waiting, watching, and longing,—
Thou comest not back again.

Waiting and watching ever,
Longing and lingering yet,
Leaves rustle and corn-stalks quiver,
Winds murmur, and waters fret;
No answer they bring, no greeting,
No speech save that sad refrain,
No voice save an echo repeating—
'He cometh not back again.'"

It may not unnaturally be thought by the English reader that Adam Lindsay Gordon is ranked too high in these pages, if for no other reason than that he is so unknown to the English literary world. But we should bear in mind the severe handicap in the race for fame involved in mere provincial publication; and intellectually Australia is simply a province of England with the added disadvantage of being separated by a six weeks' voyage from the literary metropolis of the Empire. Let us not forget that English poetry at different epochs was brought back to nature after the long artificial *régime* of Dryden and Pope, mainly by the peasant Burns and by the recluse Wordsworth. But in proportion as the English provinces become mere adjuncts of the all-devouring metropolis, must we look to the back woods and ruder communities of America and to the weird bush-land of Australia to furnish fresh sources of literary inspiration for writers of true imaginative genius. Who can rightly say what

English fiction, with its appalling three-volume conventionalities, owes to a writer like Bret Harte? That great writer,—great if he had written nothing but 'Tennessee's Partner,' and the 'Outcasts of Poker Flat,' had the advantage which no English novelist can have, of seeing the great human kaleidoscope, after a fresh "shake up." Human nature is of course intrinsically the same at Poker Flat as at Barchester Close, but its outward manifestations are vastly different.

However divided we are politically, the English-speaking communities, scattered over this earth in every possible variety of clime and scene, form one vast republic of letters. Strictly speaking, there is no American, still less Australian literature; they are but new departments of English literature.

And here we touch upon the great superiority of English over every other language; its literature is derived from such diverse sources, and its imaginative writers have at their command such a wide range of human experience.

So far from looking askance at those forms of our literature that appear "new and strange," we should hail them if of genuine merit with pride and delight. It is no doubt true that the great bulk of our literature, good as well as bad, must come from the literary metropolis, London. But it would be difficult to name three recent English writers of a higher genius than Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and Bret Harte, the three American writers of fiction who are perhaps the most original and the least conventionally English.

Adam Lindsay Gordon, during the period of his poetical activity, instead of living in a Kensington villa or a Fleet Street garret—in an atmosphere of artistic cant or of bohemian gossip—passed his days amongst sheep-shearers and boundary-riders, under the shining splendours of the Southern Cross. Nor was this greatly to his intellectual loss. Burns the Exciseman could not only gauge casks but measure the thoughts and feelings of a Tam o' Shanter, and as a ploughman he learnt to write songs that went straight to the heart of his race. So too it was perhaps well for poor Gordon that his was an unconventional life, even though, like all men of true refinement, he at times felt keenly its isolation.

"Ah! what wouldn't I give to touch a lady's hand again!" he exclaimed. But this phase of feeling was evanescent. Probably his happiest hours were spent in solitude beneath the gum-trees. "The phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the Bush," says Mr. Marcus Clarke in his excellent preface to Gordon's collected poems, "interprets itself, and the Poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt."

On whichever side may have been the balance of pleasure and pain in such a life, we who have the 'Bush Ballads' are clearly the gainers. Adam Lindsay Gordon is truly the Poet of the Australian Bush, but nevertheless his vigorous verses may have an added charm for those whose days are passed amidst the incessant and unlovely hubbub of London streets or in the peaceful monotony of English rural homes.

Few of any literary taste who were resident in Victoria, one might even say, in Australia, at the time, will forget the painful shock occasioned by the intelligence of Gordon's suicide, which took place on Friday, June 24, 1870, close to his suburban residence.

He was in the prime of life, having attained only his forty-second year. It was no secret that monetary troubles had long harassed the sensitive mind of the poet, and more than aught else had caused him to commit this rash act. His career in Australia had been singularly unfortunate, for notwithstanding the advantages of birth and education, and the possession of a small fortune, which he had inherited shortly after his arrival in South Australia, in 1852, Gordon was an altogether unsuccessful colonist, and towards these latter days of his Melbourne life, had fallen upon very evil times. He was, moreover, a pessimist, for whom life had no allurements left, and seeing no way to meet his debts, he did what the author of the "Swimmer" and the "Three Friends" might be expected to do—died by his own hand.

The present writer's volume of his poems contains a characteristic inscription from the poet's greatest and truest admirer, the late Marcus Clarke, who wrote in the fly leaf, "In memory of Britomarte, and poor old Gordon's pistol-bullet." This much we may safely concede, that it is worse than idle to prate platitudes about the cowardice of self-slaughter over the poor poet's grave. "*Requiescat in pace.*"

Little has been said of Gordon's career, and one reason is that the records are not reliable. According to the obituary notice, which appeared in the *Melbourne Argus* of June 25, 1870, the day after his death, he was a native of Cotswold, a son of Professor Gordon, and was educated, partly at Cambridge, and partly at Glasgow Universities; while Mr. Marcus Clarke, in his brief memoir of the poet, states that he was the son of an English officer, and was himself a cadet at Woolwich Academy.

It is quite clear that, unless it is decided which of these accounts is true, we shall have some future Judge Holmes, or Miss Bacon, averring that no such person as Adam Lindsay Gordon ever existed, or that, at any rate, he did not write these strange poems, which were of course the product of the more sober and cultivated brain of a University lecturer or a County Court Judge.

Yet with due deference to these quidnuncs of the future, certain

facts are known of Gordon, sufficient to enable us to be positive that he once belonged to the category of living men, and that he published a number of wild and beautiful verses: further than this it was not, perhaps, his intention that we should intrude. Even in this babbling nineteenth century there are men to whom notoriety is a curse, and who steadfastly go through life with a stern resolve that their ways shall be wrapped in silence and in isolation. They neither give nor seek the easy confidences of good fellowship, and they have grown sceptical of the rarer outpourings of unselfish friendship.

Such a man in the main was Adam Lindsay Gordon, whose poems contain, for those that can interpret them, all that he chose to reveal of his inner life.

ARTHUR PATCHETT MARTIN.

["Adam Lindsay Gordon was the third child and only son of Adam D. Gordon, a captain in the army, and Harriett Gordon, both descended from one Robert Gordon, a merchant of Bordeaux and Boulogne, who, having acquired a fortune, purchased a barony named Esslemont, in Scotland, where he settled. The poet's father belonged to one of the younger branches of the family, and entered the army early in this century, serving both in the West Indies and East Indies. After his marriage and retirement he spent a few years at Fayal, in the Azores, to recruit his health. Here in 1833 Adam Lindsay was born."—From a Memoir of the Poet, by Alex. Sutherland, in the *Melbourne Review*, October, 1883, which has come to hand since this paper was in type.]

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"Old Mr. Binney."

All their friends had said, when Mrs. Binney died, "Now what a good thing it would be if old Mr. Binney would but marry Miss Bright!"

Mr. Binney was an elderly gentleman retired from the profession of the law on a comfortable income, derived from his own exertions. In early days he had known the pinch of poverty, and, determined that no one should share these struggles, he had put off marrying until he could keep a wife in comfort.

But, as often happens when the choice is delayed, the lady whom he selected, although in many other respects a truly worthy woman, was at heart and in habit a nip-cheese.

Forced by necessity while single to make a good appearance on very small means, Mrs. Binney when married could not forget her habits of economy, and she practised them so persistently, that, instead of the social circle of friends and neighbours whose centre Mr. Binney had promised himself his house should be, the old people were thrown very much on their own resources, and, as time went on and ailments increased, the home was the reverse of cheerful.

"What can they be saving for?" every one said, and no one protested half as indignantly against the little acts of meanness reported, as the two most certain to benefit from them, namely, Mr. Binney's nephew Joe and his pretty young wife Sally. "Whenever I can get the old gentleman here," said Sally, "I stuff him with everything I can think of, because there is no knowing when he may get anything good again; and the poor old dear does enjoy it so!" And Joe used to tell a story of coming back from his office unexpectedly, to find Sally plying Uncle Binney with orange-brandy, asserting that it was "almost all juice and peel, with hardly any spirit in it."

However that might be, it put some spirit into Uncle Binney, for about nine o'clock that same night the maid arrived to ask if master was there, as he had not been back to dinner, and mistress was in "a terrible way about him."

Full of alarm, Joe set off to inquire how he could assist in the search, but, the house reached, it was found that the culprit had returned. "I—I took it into my head that I'd dine at my club," he

said. "That's all, my dear—why what a fuss to have made about nothing!"

"That was your orange-brandy," said Joe, when he got back to Sally. "You'd better be careful, Sally, or I shall have you hauled up for demoralising your respected uncle."

"I don't care," said Sally recklessly, "I shall give him some more when he comes again; he's a different man after he has been here half an hour. Do you know, Joe, when he likes he can be most agreeable: he told us stories to-day, and made jokes, and was as nice as possible; now wasn't he, Miss Bright?"

Miss Bright, the lady appealed to, was one of those cheerful, kindly beings who, because they are the favourites of every one they meet, are looked rather askant on by Dame Fortune.

Miss Bright had not been without her troubles, and very hard ones they had been too, but she bore them with a brave heart, and carried a smiling face, and had a thankful spirit within her striving always to remember her blessings, and how much they outnumbered any evils she was called upon to bear.

Indeed, to listen to Miss Bright's showing, you would have counted her as one of the luckiest persons ever born. She had had the kindest of friends, the most comfortable of situations, and the girls she had taught were endowed with an amiability of disposition which made it a positive pleasure to be with them. The only accusation she could bring against them was, that they were all in such a terrible hurry to grow up and get married, and then Miss Bright's occupation was gone, and she had to step out into the world and find a fresh field for her labours.

As years rolled on, each one adding to the score of Miss Bright's age, these hunting-grounds of instruction became more and more narrowed. Children of eight began now where girls of eighteen used to leave off, and history and geography, to say nothing of the parts of speech and grammar, were all so altered, that poor little Miss Bright had to acknowledge that at times she really did feel quite confused. "Very soon I shan't be left with anything to teach," she would say pathetically, and then Joe, or some other good fellow who heard her, would declare she should set up a school for wives, for there never were such wives as the girls whom Miss Bright had brought up. She had taught Sally and her sister, and though since then she had had other situations, at holiday time, or whenever she was seeking employment, she always returned to the house of Dr. Brendon, their father, who regretted that he and his wife could not afford to keep her altogether.

When Mr. Binney dropped in, as he frequently did, to inquire after his old friends the Brendons, he from time to time found Miss Bright

there, and happening on the occasion of one of her visits to bring the news that Mrs. Binney was ill, with no one whose business it seemed to be to look after her, nothing was more natural than that Miss Bright should volunteer, and a great comfort they found her.

So sprightly yet unobtrusive was the cheery little woman, that Mrs. Binney herself was influenced in her favour, until, with an eye to their mutual comfort, Mr. Binney proposed Miss Bright staying with them altogether. "Why not?" he said. "We could well afford to pay her a salary." But this word *salary*, acting like magic on Mrs. Binney, seemed to bring her to her senses immediately. She would be very glad to have Miss Bright as a visitor as long as she liked to stay, but as to living with them altogether, "No!" she would not give her consent to that; she had always objected to having in her house a third party. So, with the quick perceptions of a delicate nature, Miss Bright, seeing how matters stood, soon took her departure; this time to try daily teaching, and her report was that the experiment was successful. For a few years all ran smoothly, and then—though this time she had begun with quite young children—the tiresome little monkeys would grow so, that the boys were ready for public schools, and the girls for more advanced education, and alas! there did not seem anybody else to replace them. It was then that Miss Bright's friends pulled very long faces indeed,—what would she do? they asked her.

"Oh, something is sure to turn up," she would say hopefully. "Whenever I have come to my last ebb, an opening has been made for me, so I am not going to despair now."

And she said this all the more emphatically, because in spite of her confidence she could not help feeling that her heart had never seemed to sink quite so low before, and a voice, which she could not still, kept repeating, "What will you do when you grow older?—teaching will get harder than ever." That was true enough, but what else was there for her to do?

When Mrs. Binney died, which happened quite suddenly about a year before, there had been some talk as to Miss Bright going to Mr. Binney as housekeeper, but this proposition had been made without the knowledge or consent of the principal person concerned, who, as soon as the hint was given, negatived it by seemingly taking no notice; except that he set about making his arrangements without consulting anybody.

Mr. Binney thoroughly appreciated Miss Bright, but he had lost his taste for matrimony; he remembered that he had spent forty excellent years without a wife, and notwithstanding that he was now a widower he could not conscientiously say that he felt his state to be so very unhappy.

Susan the cook, respectable and staid, would he felt sure manage his household properly, and if it proved that she should give way to extravagance, as people seemed to say, Mr. Binney fancied he could better put up with that evil than with too much of the economy from which he had suffered already.

So all the hopes that on the death of Mrs. Binney, Joe and Sally and the Brendons had cherished for Miss Bright, were ruthlessly dashed to the ground. Evidently Aunt B. was not to have a successor.

"If we could but have got her there as housekeeper," said two of these arch-conspirators, "the rest would have been easy." But though they returned to the attack several times, no good came of it. Mr. Binney shared in their regret at the loss of Miss Bright's pupils, wondered, as they did, what would become of her, and, his visitors gone, to make his sympathy apparent he sat down and wrote a kind little note with a cheque for £10 folded within it.

"He's an old stupid," said Sally, who sat with a letter from Miss Bright in her hand in which she communicated to her friends Mr. Binney's generosity, "and now she is going away altogether, ever so far"—for Miss Bright had had another piece of news to tell. An old pupil of early days had been recently left a widow; her health was as delicate as her heart was kind, and when she made the proposition that Miss Bright should come and spend the remainder of her days with her, it was not entirely of her own comfort she had been thinking. Miss Bright had readily accepted her offer, and she had written to tell Sally that the next week she should come up and see them.

She could only stay a few hours with them when she came. The farewell visit was to be paid later. "But I think," she said as she was going, "I will call on my way home and say good-bye to Mr. Binney, in case I might not have another opportunity."

"Do," said Sally, and away she went.

Mr. Binney was at home. He had not been quite well lately; nothing more than a cold, but it had kept him a prisoner. To-day he might have gone out, but he had not felt inclined to, and he gallantly said he was glad to be in, as he should have been sorry indeed to have missed seeing Miss Bright.

"And so you are really going to leave us," he said, and almost regretfully too. "Well, you will be very much missed. I don't know what the Brendons will do."

"They will not miss me more than I shall them," and the brave little woman made an effort that her voice should not sound shaky; "but you know, Mr. Binney, I am not growing younger, am I?"

"No," he said, "that is true. I was saying the same to myself of myself only to-day."

"Yes, only with men it does not seem to matter, but with women the thought always comes with a little shudder, that when we get old, and want quiet and rest, and a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, there is a doubt whether we shall be able to get them."

Mr. Binney did not answer, and fearing she was saying too much about her own feelings—always with her a very secondary consideration—she altered the tone of her voice, which had been a little sad, and went on in her usual cheerful way: "But then I ought to feel so thankful that this opening has been made for me. I told them that I knew something would come; it has always done so; I have always been so lucky."

"It's your happy disposition makes you say so, my dear Miss Bright; a cheerful spirit shortens the longest day. I wish I could follow your example. I often feel condemned at my want of contentment—of gratitude I ought to say."

But that Miss Bright would not allow; she reminded Mr. Binney of the many kind actions he had done, and in her own quiet way thanked him for the thoughtful present he had sent to her.

"No, no, no, now you must not speak of that," Mr. Binney hastily interrupted her; and to give a turn to the conversation he said she "must have some tea," and ringing to order it, he hoped she could stay.

Well, yes, she thought she could spare time for that—indeed, to be plain, she was not in such a very great hurry. The fact had been that Joe had had an unexpected holiday; and she saw that, only for her being there, he had come home to go out somewhere with Sally.

"So I hope the little fib I told will be forgiven me, for when I said that I was wanted at home, although it was quite true perhaps, I need not but for that have left quite so early. But it was so nice of Joe to come home, I do love to see husbands and wives companions to each other!"

"Ah, indeed, yes; that is the object of matrimony, too often I fear, lost sight of in our day, by the young and the old too."

But Miss Bright did not agree. "No," she "knew so many united couples. There were the Brendons now—" but at this moment the tea was brought in, and Miss Bright asked should she pour it out. Her offer was accepted. "Only," said Mr. Binney, "you must take off your cloak, or you won't feel the good of it when you go; and your bonnet too, wouldn't you be more comfortable without that?"

Miss Bright said "No," she would not take her bonnet off.

"Haven't a cap with you, I suppose?" said the old gentleman slily.

"Yes, indeed I have—a present from Sally—and a very becoming one too."

"Put it on then, and let me pass my opinion."

Miss Bright hastened to obey, and when she came for his inspection the smile on her face and the soft pink in her cheek made her look ten years younger.

"Well," she said, "now what do you think of it?"

"I think if you take my advice you will never wear any other."

"Really," and she laughed softly; "but it is for high days and holidays, you know!" And she tip-toed to look in the chimney-glass, saying that it certainly was a very pretty cap, and then she sat down to pour out the tea. "The best tea things!" she said admiringly; "I am so fond of pretty china!" And then searching in the sugar basin, she added, "I have not forgotten that you like two lumps of sugar, you see."

Mr. Binney smiled complacently, a feeling of well being and comfort took possession of him; the daylight was gradually fading away, but the fire burnt brightly, and every now and then a flame would leap up and show to him the cosy room and the pleasant face of his companion.

Of a certainty it was very pleasant to have a congenial somebody to bear one company, one who could talk well, listen well, and hold her tongue well, if necessary. Experience had assured him of that. Miss Bright possessed each of these good qualities. When she had stayed there when Mrs. Binney was first ill, their evenings had passed very pleasantly, and recalling the things they had done, he asked:

"Do you often play chess now?"

"No, never."

"Cribbage, backgammon?"

"I've no one to play with. That is one thing in my going away," and she swallowed down a sigh—"my evenings will be less lonely."

"Ah, yes, I find the time very long after dinner. I don't like to go to bed before half-past ten, although I often feel inclined to."

"And the days draw in so quickly now, there is no afternoon—it is all evening, which reminds me that it is getting time for me to go, for it takes me quite an hour to get to the station."

"Not in a cab?"

"No, but I am going to walk; it is quite fine and dry, and if I feel tired at the Conway Road I shall wait at the corner for the omnibus passing."

Miss Bright began to put on her bonnet. Mr. Binney walked to the window; for a minute he looked out, then he rang the bell.

"I shall go as far as the Conway Road with you."

"Oh, Mr. Binney! No, pray don't think of such a thing; it might give you cold, and there isn't the slightest occasion—I am so accustomed to go about alone."

But Mr. Binney remained firm; his hat and coat were brought to

him, and away the two set off together. They chatted pleasantly as they walked along, mingling with their talk some measure of regret at the approaching parting. "I shall hope to come and see them all sometimes," Miss Bright said. "I know as long as the Brendons have a home they will take me in."

"And remember that so long as I have a house there will be room for you in it."

"That is very kind of you, Mr. Binney," she said softly. "Thank you, if I should never accept it. I am sure I do not know why people are all so good to me."

Mr. Binney apparently was no better able to inform her, and they walked on silently until the Conway Road was reached.

"Now then," said Miss Bright, "here we say farewell," and she held out her hand, but Mr. Binney did not take it; he was engaged in hailing a cab he saw, then he drew out his purse and Miss Bright knew that he intended settling with the man for the fare. She shook her head at him reprovingly. "The omnibus," she said, "would have done very well for me."

Mr. Binney gave the directions to the driver and then he held out his hand, hesitated, opened the door and said, "I don't see why I should not go with you as far as the station," and before Miss Bright was sufficiently recovered to reply they were driving on, seated side by side together.

At the railway station they had but a very short time of waiting; the train drew up, the passengers were getting in. Miss Bright stood near the carriage which she had chosen; nothing remained but to say good-bye, and enter.

"And you will let us hear how you get on?" for she had not said she was coming up again.

"Oh, I shall often write to the Brendons and Sally. You will hear of me through them."

"And I hope so very much that you will be comfortable and happy."

Miss Bright tried to smile, but her eyes filled rapidly, and to hide the tears she half turned away.

"I wish that you were not obliged to go away, couldn't *anything* be managed for you?"

She shook her head sadly. "No," she said; "I tried everything I could," and here a sob would come, "but nobody seemed to want me."

"I—I want you." Mr. Binney was stammering out his words excitedly. "Miss Bright, can you—will you stay for me? It sounds little that I have to offer, but if a comfortable home and a kind friend could tempt you, you shall have both if you think you could consent to become Mrs. Binney."

"Mrs. Binney!—I!"—everything seemed to swim around her—"but, Mr. Binney, such an idea never once occurred to me."

"I am very sure of that, my dear," he said earnestly, "and it has taken some time to come to me, or I should have made the offer long ago; however, better late than never—that is, if you will accept me."

"Oh, but I think it is so good of you—and you feel sure that I can make you happy. What will the Brendons and Sally say?"

"Say that I am more lucky than I deserve to be for not asking you before. Now I understand why I wouldn't consent to your being my housekeeper; I was wanting you for my wife, you know."

Miss Bright held up her hands in dismay.

"Oh my!" she cried. "There's the train off—gone, I declare!"

"What of that if it is?—another will soon follow, and while we are waiting for it, we can arrange our plans and fix the day."

And if any one wishes to know how it all ended, I can satisfy their curiosity by telling them that the wedding has taken place, the bride and bridegroom are settled in their own house, and it is unanimously voted that a more happy, cheery couple never were seen than the present Mr. and Mrs. Binney.

Bronte on Mount Etna.

The serpent slipped about the Garden of Eden, and we all know what mischief he did; and the scirocco sometimes blows in Palermo. And when the scirocco blows, Palermo, which is as much like Eden as any copy can be like the original, has its serpent which makes its fairest fruits but dust and bitterness, and life altogether no brisker than a wilted flower hanging limply by the parched highway. The October sun was lying like molten brass on the streets and striking back in waves of aerial flame from the blistering walls. In crossing the Piazza Marina we agreed that if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had been set down on this scorching pavement, with the red-hot brazen sun above them, there would have been no need for a burning fiery furnace for their punishment. Cremation would have been accomplished at a less expense of material. Wherefore, when an invitation came to us to go two thousand feet above the line of the coast where Phaethusa and Lampetia kept their Sun-God father's flocks on the one side, and the Cyclops hurled rocks at Ulysses and his men on the other—to see how the vintage is managed at Maniace, the property of the Duca di Bronte (Viscount Bridport) on Mount Etna—we felt that we had not only a rare pleasure in prospect, but that we had in a certain sense received a warrant for new life, and that in that emphatically "aria virgine" we should be able to breathe freely once more.

We have to leave Palermo for Catania at three in the morning. It is a stupid hour, splitting the night into two unserviceable portions; but Italian railroads leave much to be desired in their management, and the comfort or convenience of travellers is the last consideration that troubles the administration. The carriage that meets us the next day at the little station of Piedimonte, is country-built, with a net underneath for the luggage. The horses, with their bells and red worsted puffs and tufts, are not much to look at, but they are excellent enough in the proof;—for the journey to the Castello di Maniace is full five hours long; the roads are more or less rough though substantially good; it is against the collar all the way, with steep bits of extra severity as the "fioriture" of the main theme; yet the two shabby-looking, ill-groomed grey beasts do the journey without a halt for bait or rest; they go down that sharp

descent, which is very much like the side of a house, without a drag and only a wheel tied up with rope, and are in nowise distressed when they come to a final stand within the Castle gates, and their gallantly done day's work is over. The Maniace "campiere," or guard, who has been sent down to the station to see after us, is a fine, stalwart, personable-looking man in the Bronte uniform of red and blue. He is armed with both gun and revolver, as a matter of precaution rather than of actual need; the country being quiet, but, though nominally quiet, practically untrustworthy. And as one never knows what may happen, it is better to be on the safe side, and to have a few ounces of lead to dispose of should the grimy descendants of the ruddy-cheeked shepherds sung of by Theocritus wish to try conclusions with the traveller, and prove by sight and touch and deed of transfer the exact state of his purse and appointments.

The road gives magnificent points of view, and is more or less interesting throughout. But there is nothing of special value to detain us in any of the three little towns through which we pass—Piedimonte, Linguaglossa, and Randazzo. This last, however, has picturesque bits of skyline and framework, caught as we drive through its narrow streets and peer down its still narrower lanes. But people who live in Italy get spoilt and fastidious, and are roused into enthusiasm only by masterpieces. In the plains the vineyards have long been stripped and abandoned; and a stripped vineyard is one of the most dilapidated and disreputable-looking things in nature. It is as bad as a bunch of decayed flowers. But higher up the work is still active, and the road is alive with grape-gatherers bearing their baskets full of shining fruit—the men on their shoulders, the women on their heads: the one Atlases, the other Caryatides—and the ragged little robins of boys imitating the men. Donkeys laden with pig-skins, wet and purpled with wine, or with narrow pointed barrels also wet and purpled, are again signs of the times; and the whole country is given up to grapes and wine, as it was in the days when Dionysos was the great god of the hour, and Ampelus sat by his side on the ivory couch strewn with leopard skins, while fauns and bacchantes danced in wild abandonment before them, and made the heavens ring with their joyous shouts of "Evoe! Evoe!" Those grape-gatherers of to-day, ragged, dirty, poverty-stricken, weary, are very little like the traditional fauns and bacchantes of the past; and as little like the shepherds and nymphs of song. They are not even beautiful; though sometimes you see a face among the little children and the very young girls which, if clean, would be enchanting; but for the most part the men look like brigands, and the women are repulsive hags, and the Ideal falls to pieces like a broken marionette at the rude touch of the Real.

After Randazzo, the way becomes bleak and wind-swept. At this time of the year it is especially barren; for the young wheat has not begun to show, and the land is either brown from being newly ploughed, or hoary with stubble and withered weeds. In a short time it will be as green as summer pastures; for the soil is fertile beyond all measure—the kind of soil of which Jerrold spoke when he said: "If you tickle the earth with a hoe it laughs back with a harvest"—and when the wheat has come to its height a man may walk concealed between the rows. Some tracts are scored all over with jutting lava rocks like that modern puzzle, whereof the edges are engrailed, not sharp and clean as with the older kind. But in every free space of only a few inches square, on every ledge, on every available span, the peasants plant and sow; and miniature fields, no bigger than a pocket-handkerchief, are made to yield their tiny crops with the rest. A space two yards square counts as a forty-acre field and is really a handsome farm. It is a practical illustration of the old saying about the pickle and the mickle, and a well stored granary in consequence.

There are no flowers now in this sleeping-time of nature; but there is a tall skeletonised thistle which stands up by the wayside like a plant done in silver; and though the fields at one's feet want colour, the far-off mountains and the shadows on those nearer at hand are of a purple more intense than any pigments known to men could represent. Etna has put on a light "camicia" as the people call it, and is powdered with snow, off which the wind blows cold and hungry, suggesting the wolves which are still to be found hereabouts. It is so keen, so penetrating, that it is pleasant to get out of the carriage and walk for a mile or so across that great lava stream of 1879, which even now smokes under a sharp shower, and would be too hot to tunnel under if desired. There is a certain house where the lava stopped in answer to the prayer and vow of the owner. He promised the Madonna some good gift if she would protect his property; but when the danger was passed he forebore to pay his debt. So the Madonna punished him, say the people, by killing his wife the next year. This is a tradition which runs on all fours with that of a certain vineyard belonging to a Protestant holder. Unlike the Duke of Bronte, this special Protestant has neglected to keep up the church or to have mass celebrated for his people. In consequence whereof his vineyard fails; and when all the sky elsewhere is clear, a hailstorm or a blast of withering wind is sure to destroy his vintage. It does not tell against the story, nor weaken the belief of the peasants in this gentleman's punishment for sin, that it is not true, and that the yield of this special vineyard follows the average of the year throughout.

By the road-side is a curious lake called Gurrida, the water from which loses itself in certain large round holes, travels three miles underground, then breaks forth as a river which runs off to join the Simeto—the ancient Symæthus. After this we come to the steep descent spoken of before, where the horses look as if they were walking on their haunches, and the carriage looks as if perched nodding on the top of their backs, and where the wheel is roped for all the drag thought necessary by these practical believers in fate and trusters in Providence. And at the foot of this side of a house, called by courtesy a hill—there where the row of poplars shine like golden spires uprising to the evening sky, and the garden trees are like gigantic flowers in the glory of their autumn suits—stands the long low pile of that Castello di Maniace which is our welcome bourne.

This is that estate of Bronte which, together with the title of Duca di Bronte, was given by Ferdinand IV. to Lord Nelson in 1799. It is now held, with the title, by Viscount Bridport, the collateral descendant on the spindle side of this the most popular hero in our history. It is of great importance and of immense extent; and in the old maps takes in the very summit of Mount Etna, crater, lava, snows, and all. Nelson never saw his Sicilian holding—the lands which made him a duke and gave him a duchy; but he sent for the "campieri"—literally field-guards—to go down to him at Palermo, where he feasted them royally on board his ship. The name of Maniace comes from the small town which was built, not far from the Castello—built by and named after George Maniaces, "first sword-bearer and Master of the Palace of Michael, Emperor of Constantinople, and Prefect of Sicily"—to perpetuate the memory of a victory that he gained over the Saracens about the year A.D. 1032. In proof of which victory, is there not, about two miles up the river, a huge rock called the Saracen's Rock to this day, showing where the fight came off and the sword-bearer was the conqueror? After the town was built, a Benedictine monastery was founded in 1173 by Queen Margaret, then the widow of William the Bad. It was dedicated by her to "Santa Maria." After the worship of the Virgin was ordained, it was said to be dedicated to "La Madre di Dio." When Margaret's son, William the Good, built the splendid glory of Monreale above Palermo, he gave to this later sculptured dream and inlaid jewel supreme jurisdiction over the less stately establishment of Maniace. But the greater seems to have had some consideration for the less, for we are told that, "Theobald, the first Abbot and Bishop of Monreale, granted parochial rights to the Church of Maniace; and Nicholas, the Archbishop of Messina, again made it exempt with a new diploma, and declared all the churches which belonged to it throughout his diocese free." They say that Queen

Margaret's jewels are buried within an arrow's flight from Maniace. Why they should have been buried, and on what occasion of disturbance, history does not explain. In our own times however, during the Sicilian revolution, the deeds and old important documents pertaining to the estate were buried for safety in the garden; and there is a tradition of certain jewels hidden under the flooring tiles, also at the same time and for the same purpose of safe concealment;—which jewels by the way have never come to light.

The first Abbot of Maniace was William Blesense, brother to the famous Pierre du Blois. But he resigned his office in two years; and his brother Pierre, who, as tutor to the King, was used to the softnesses of life, and probably had no taste for the rough missionary work necessary to an abbot living in the wilds of Sicily, wrote to congratulate him on his decision, and to advise his immediate return to France. There were two other abbots of note among the long list of spiritual rulers lording it over the half-savage souls under the shadow of Mount Etna. One was the Blessed William, who had to do with the Saracens, and who, unarmed and incomplete, went out to meet a band of these black-browed marauders, whom he hoped to convert by godly speech. Finding that his exhortations had no effect, he seized the luckless donkey of a passer-by, took off the beast's hind-leg, and with this sole weapon, like another Samson—substituting a living leg for a dead jaw-bone—overcame the foe and put them to the rout. When he stuck the donkey's leg on again, he put it on the wrong way; which, inconvenient for the animal, was a standing attestation of the miracle. In spite of this miracle, however, William is only Blessed. His friends were too poor to pay for his Sanctification. His body yet lies beneath the altar in the church within the Castle walls. It is almost entire, wanting the arms; is clothed in the Benedictine habit; and is venerated exceedingly by the poor people who come there to the weekly Mass. The second Abbot of note, and the last, was Roger Borgia, he who was afterwards the infamous Pope Alexander VI., and whose name still survives in one of the vineyards, which is called to this day "Vigneto Borgia." He too had no special love for the wild life of a mitred missionary, and, "with the consent of the King, and the good pleasure of the Apostolic See," he sold the whole concern, in 1497, to the Hospital at Palermo, for 2000 gold pieces down, reserving to himself, however, a yearly pension of 700 gold pieces in addition. "In the name of the Abbey, then, the Rectors of the above-named hospital pronounce the eleventh vote in the Parliaments, and now style themselves temporal lords of Bronte, a populous town, certainly without armed rights, but with absolute power in the choice of the magistrates." The end of all things ecclesiastical came in 1693, when an earthquake levelled

to the dust convent and church; the only portion of this last left standing being that eastern part where the body of the Blessed William was lying in peace in his Benedictine robes. Architecturally the value of what is left consists in the fine old Norman door studded with large-headed iron nails, in the obtusely-pointed Norman arches, and the pillars, of which there are eight, "with curious old carving on the capitals."

The present family wisely keep up the services in this church. Every Saturday the carriage goes to Bronte for the priest to come and say Mass here for the Sunday worshippers; which surely is a better thing than that rampant and aggressive Protestantism which would deny these poor people the consolations of religion altogether, unless administered to them by a clergyman in a Geneva gown and bands, to whom the cross would be venerated as a verbal image but abhorrent as a visual symbol. These priests have not, it must be confessed, done much to enlighten their shaggy flock; and the most astounding superstitions flourish among them. In fact nothing is too absurd to be believed; and "credo quia impossibile" finds its aptest illustration among the peasantry of remote Italian villages.

Miss Thomson, to whose kindness I am indebted for all the historical data of this paper, as well as for the anecdotes immediately following, says in her diary, speaking of the first visit of Lord Bridport and his family to Maniace: "We had brought a sitting of Dorking eggs from England, but had much difficulty in getting them put under a hen. There is a superstition here that the only time when it is safe to let a hen begin to sit is four days after the full moon."

The extracts which come now are made from her commonplace book, where she has collected much curious and valuable information on the "Roba di Sicilia."

Combattimento dei Venti.—During the night of January 5-6th (the Feast of the Epiphany) there is a fight among the winds. Whichever gains the victory will be the prevailing wind of that year. Two tenants from Tortorice came to Maniace on business. As it was a cold day, il Duchino (the Hon. Alexander Nelson-Hood) shut the door of the office. Seeing one of them turn pale and become quite silent, he asked what was the matter? The other man said that his companion was afraid, because now, if anything happened, he could not run away. The door was set open, and he at once recovered his spirits and began to talk.

Locusts.—Great numbers having appeared on one of the Duchy farms, the tenant was advised to turn in some turkeys to destroy them. But he preferred to send for a priest, who sprinkled the place with holy water and cursed the locusts, which were supposed to disappear in consequence.

Rats.—In the farm house called La Scala, in the Placa, the farmer found that the rats had eaten all the inside of his cheeses, leaving only the rind. He told one of his labourers of this, saying he must carry off his cheeses to Bronte. This man, whose clothes had also been gnawed, replied: "Leave it to me, I will see about it." He then sharpened a nail to a point, like a needle, and stuck it in the floor where the rats passed, saying: "May the rat which gnawed my drawers fall on this and kill himself." The farmer and he watched until they saw the rats come and walk past the nail unhurt. At last one ran upon it and was killed. From that time no rat came near the place. This man had the power of charming away pain when horses, &c., were suffering from colic. He was refused absolution by the priest after confession, and not allowed to receive the Sacrament. There was also a "Monaca di Casa," who lived in Linguaglossa, who had these supernatural powers. She was consulted by those who had been robbed. After listening to their story she thought for a few minutes, and then told them where the stolen goods were to be found. One of the Maniace men went to her when the driving belts of the engine were stolen. An old robber who died in Bronte, four years ago, at the age of one hundred and five, had the same reputation; and a poor, sick, scrofulous boy, bedridden for the last twelve years, is also one of the "white witch" tribe. He knows the name of and cure for all diseases; where stolen things are hidden; where money is to be found buried under stones; and the like; and he has predicted his own death, which is to take place in two years from this date.

Bones dancing.—When Peppe Pagano's cottage was being built some human bones were dug up. These were put in a basket previous to being reinterred, and placed for the night in a corner of the hut where the workmen slept. They declared the next morning that they had been kept awake all the night by the bones rattling and dancing in the basket.

A Woman possessed.—In August 1881, during a terrific storm of thunder, lightning, wind, and hail as large as pigeons' eggs, a priest died in Bronte. He was an enormously fat and self-indulgent man, very rich and with a bad character. At the moment when his corpse was carried into the church, a young married woman, the mother of three children, respected and esteemed by all who knew her, was receiving the Sacrament. As she opened her mouth the spirit of T., the priest, passed into her. From that time she has been subject to fits of madness, in which she speaks and acts exactly as he did, her voice sounding like his. She has confessed many of his crimes; among others that he had been in the habit of cheating the poor by giving unsigned receipts, or writing down the wrong amount when they entrusted corn or money to him. An attempt was made by the

priests to exorcise the demon which had entered into her; but he threatened to go into another young woman if they did; so, thinking it as well to circumscribe the area of the devil's activities, and wiser to put up with what they knew than to attempt unknown charms, they desisted and left things as they were.

To cure a Dog of Biting.—Dig up a long bramble with its roots. Tie it between two trees, and make the dog pass under it three times. He will then only bark at strangers instead of biting their legs.

Witches.—Sicilian fishermen are very superstitious. Knowing this, a party of thirteen young men, from a village on the coast, went one moonlight night down to the shore where some fishermen were lying half asleep, waiting till it was time to draw in their nets. Going into a cave they undressed themselves to their shirts and drawers, tied handkerchiefs round their elbows and ankles, and noiselessly approaching the fishermen over the sands, joined hands in a circle and danced round without uttering a sound, separating every now and then, to perform a grotesque *pas seul.* This went on for some time in the most profound silence. At last one of the fishermen was roused, and rubbing his eyes, he called out in a voice shaking with fear, "Cola! Cola! i magari! i magari!" By degrees they all awoke, but did not dare to move. They remained lying on the sand, gazing with terror at the supposed witches. When the latter had enjoyed the fun long enough, they darted into the cave where they had left their clothes, picked them up and ran off, one after the other, up a mountain path. To this day the fishermen believe that they saw a dance of witches on the sands that moonlight night. A fisherman going to his work was met by a large sow which got into his way, and, as he fancied, looked so fierce that he took her for a witch. He therefore would not go by that road, but took another that led down to the beach. Here he was met by another sow, and the double encounter was too much for his nerves. He ran back vowing that he was beset by witches, and that he would do no fishing for that day!

Certain remedies too may come in as superstitions, for what else would you call these three recipes?

Earache.—Roll a narrow strip of linen into a conical shape; soak it in melted wax; when cold place it in the ear; set fire to it and let it burn slowly.

Headache (severe, from fever).—Kill a dog, fowl, or any small animal; open it and place it while warm on the patient's head.

Bite of Dog.—Apply some of the hair of the *same* dog dipped in oil, to the wound at once; keep it on till the place has healed.

So far Miss Thomson's interesting and valuable collection. Do

not these extracts take us back almost centuries in our own history? This last remedy indeed we have perpetuated in the proverb of "a hair of the dog that bit you;" and for all the rest we have parallel instances in the days when we believed in witchcraft and possession, and held that the orderly laws of nature could be interrupted by any old woman who chose to take command of the viewless spirits, and make the prowling demons of the air subservient to her will.

The end of October is scarcely the time for making long excursions about Maniace. The wind is keen; the weather broken; the days are uncertain. A morning of brilliant sunshine, when the "virgin air" is crisp and clear, and the sun enlivens, animates, vivifies while it warms, may be succeeded by an afternoon of heavy rain. Wherefore we do not attempt the great expedition of the place—the Beech Woods and that long rocky ridge of the Serraspina, whence on clear days the Lipari Islands can be plainly seen—but content ourselves with a drive to the Saracens' Bridges; beautiful enough for any one! The roads are all roads of desolation seeming to go nowhere and to come from nowhere. Yet we meet with files of men and women travelling in these uninhabited regions—whither and wherefore? For, after the village of Manetto on that steep decline yonder—which village is kept from slipping into the valley only by an immense barrier of rock buttressing up the unstable earth—and some miles farther on the more important town of Bronte spread out on the mountain side, not a village, still less a town, is to be seen. Bronte, by-the-bye, is said to have been peopled by the inhabitants of twenty-four sporadic hamlets, the men whereof were such lawless rascals that the Emperor Charles V. hounded them all out of their fastnesses into one compound, the better to keep them in order. But how beautiful the mountains are, with their sharp clear outlines set against the bright blue sky, and their shadows worked in with that intense purple which suggests all manner of ethereal loveliness! How glorious are the streaks of sunshine falling here on a golden vineyard, there on a solitary tree of burning red; here again on the broken face of some old grey rock which it turns to amethyst, and there on scattered heaps of lava, jewelled with orange-coloured lichen and plumed with waving fronds on sheltered ledges where vegetation has already begun. Ah! what a magician that sunshine is! How it transmutes to noble beauty all things whereon it falls, even things sordid, mean, and in themselves unlovely! Why, the ragged red gown of that peasant woman passing on the lower road, and the yellow and green of her head-kerchief come out like a bit of mediæval mosaic work in the surrounding grey of the landscape! Near at hand we should see only dirt and crudity; touched by the sun we have colour and harmony which the looms of India itself could not match!

At last we reach the bridges, with their sharp pitch, high parapets, high round-headed arches, and the splendid view of the river and the defile, backed by that wonderful hill clothed with oranges and olives like a bit taken from the plains and landed here. Here we halt for luncheon, while groups of peasants with mules pass to and fro; and, for all that this is not Spain, iresistibly suggests Gil Blas. In spring the whole place is one large carpet of flowers. Even now we gather yellow tulips and pale lilac, autumn crocuses; capers with their long purple stamens like tassels, and their half-opened buds like wax; a sweet and beautiful white clematis called here lagara, but the exact botanical name of which I have not been able to verify; red valerian; mallow; mandrake or mandragora; cyclamen; with the long-stalked daisy and the pretty pale purple aster. From the mill we have one of the most beautiful views of its kind:—a narrow gorge of overhanging rocks thickly covered with flowers and trees and trailing growths of every kind; a rushing river foaming onwards from ledge to ledge in hurrying cascades and tumultuous flow of perpetual unrest; a bounding line of purple mountain; and such a sky as one gets only in Sicily. But the people! Some women are washing at the fountain as we pass; and we ask each other: "Are they men or women?" so hideous, coarsened and unsexed are they. Then, when we have "done" it all, we turn back on our way, thunder and grind over the rough road gallantly, and reach the home domain before nightfall. And how lovely that home domain looks in the lengthening shadows and the slanting rays as we slide and slip down that side of a house already spoken of! The yellowing tracts of vineyards, the reddened trees of the garden, the golden poplars, the grey-green olives, and the long line of buildings, within which is one of the most delightful homes to be found out of England—what a picture it is, with Etna grim, dangerous and deadly, towering over all!

A kind of feudal state is kept up at the Castello, where precautions are still wise if not of imminent necessity. Just as no expedition is made without an armed escort, so do guards stand at the gate sifting all who seek to enter. At night the dogs are let loose in the court—how restlessly they whine and ask to be released as the time draws near!—and when the bolts are shot at sundown no one is allowed to go out till sunrise, save on urgent business and with special permission. Sometimes a party of carabinieri come up at nightfall and demand shelter for the night. They are after brigands who have escaped this way; and the Duchino has to put up them and their cattle and feed them according to their state. This too, is part of the ducal obligations of Maniace. And sometimes nomadic compatriots wander by, and are

entertained hospitably; as in old mediæval times when food and shelter were given indiscriminately to lovely ladies and lordly knights, silver-tongued minstrels and holy friars—to all and sundry who blew the horn at the gate and demanded shelter from the perils without.

The Castle is quite strong enough to withstand a moderate siege, further fortified as it is by the vigorous Simeto which forms a kind of natural boundary on one side. The Simeto rises in those Beech woods some miles away. It was formerly the sweet nymph Thalia, too well beloved by Jupiter, who was changed into a river to avoid the customary wrath of Juno; as *il fiume freddo* was Acis after he was killed by Polyphemus—to the glorification of all that part of the coast where he runs down to the sea. And, by-the-way, amber is still found at the mouth of the Simeto.

The Castle garden is quaint and interesting, neither wholly Italian nor wholly English, and with modern embroidery ornamenting its mediæval simplicity. A noble mulberry-tree is like so much glittering bronze; a guelder rose is a burning bush of rich carmine; the walls glow as if set with rubies where the leaves of the Virginian creeper flush into their splendid death; the tall and slender poplars are, as we said, like spires of gold; in the garden beds all sorts and kinds of autumn flowers give life and variety to the formal spaces blocked out with tall box-edgings; and the pomidoro hang on the walls to ripen in contrast with the heavy bunches of golden grapes festooning the walks. All this colour and fragrance—roses and violets, amaryllides and sweet-scented medlar, heliotrope and geraniums, myrtle and strong bushes of "lemoncina"—make us forget that this is now really November; that we are two thousand feet above the level of the sea; that Etna is covered with snow; and that in the true winter wolves come down to devour the flocks, when they have a chance.

The Castello is a small self-contained town, where almost everything save weaving is done. The storehouses, specially of grain, oil, and wood, are really what Italians call stupendous, and seem as if they must be inexhaustible. In the muniment room are rare old documents which would give employment for years to experts—documents in Greek, in Latin, in old Italian, in modern tongues, treating of grants and sales and transfers and law-suits, where now the Duchy gained and now it lost, according as the tide set and the law ran. The most interesting of all however is Nelson's will, his clear and firmly traced signature, written with his left hand, standing at the foot of each page—"Nelson and Bronte."

The estate is fertile as well as extensive, and produces grain and oil of first-rate quality. But its supreme excellence—its speciality—is in its vineyards. Just now the vintage is in full swing. It is a fine sight, however we may look at it—as artists for what we see,

poets for what is suggested, or political economists for what is promised. The sun lies fair and full on the golden leaves, splashed with ruby-red and bolder bronze. Thick clusters of purple grapes hang round the central stem and from the leading branches in heavy bunches, which would weigh down the tender shoots were they not strengthened and protected. The dusty bloom of some is still untouched; but where ripeness has advanced so far as to make the grapes almost raisins, that exquisite virgin purity has gone. These dried and fully ripened grapes are pearls of price in the vintage, and help in the perfection of the exquisite wine made on the estate. Gangs of men, women, and children gather the grapes with the deftness of long practice and inherited capacity. Each gang is under the direction of a "campiere," and the "massero" is over all. On a stage dominating the whole scene stands an armed campiere; and armed guards patrol the place by night. When the gangs walk to and fro from the vineyard to the treading-vats, they are preceded by bagpipes, to the sound of which they march in time, and sometimes break out into a dancing-step as they go. They get up an impromptu dance in the yard, while the foremost of the file, whose baskets are already empty, are waiting for the last who have yet to cast theirs into the mass. On Sunday, after service, while they are all assembled in the Castle court, they produce a tambourine to aid the bagpipes of the gatherers and the concertina of the treaders, and dance under the sunlight, backed by the trees and the mountains, as if they were the figures in some old picture suddenly animated into life. The men do their steps with praiseworthy precision and agility—ailes de pigeon, double-shuffle, cuts, pirouettes, and all the rest of it; while the women, if less demonstrative, are more graceful and more suggestive. When we meet them filing to and fro in the narrow vineyard paths, the bright-eyed boys pull off their caps, and the bright-eyed girls put their hands together in an attitude of supplication, as they say, "'Cenza benedic"—which means in full, "Excellenza, benedica!" "Benedicite," replies the Duchino, the sovereign and lord of this little kingdom—or rather the viceroy, the Duca proper being his father.

The grape-treading is done by men only. Here, at Maniace, where wine-making is conducted with scrupulous care, the treaders wear soft leather mocassins, kept only for the press-room. To tread the grapes is a better way than to crush them by machinery. There is something, they say, in the trituration of the skins by the human foot which is lost in the action of iron and wood. But the mocassins take off the sense of uncleanliness, and unite the good of the tread with the cleanliness of machinery. The yard is full of purple, bloated pigskins and of pointed barrels, stained with wine about the mouth

like human beings who have supped with Bacchus and Silenus. The air is heavy with the smell of wine; the ground is strewn with crushed grapes; the whole place is Bacchic, Eastern, unhomelike. From the press where the men stamp round and round in a rhythmic step according to the music, every now and then come bursts of laughter and snatches of wild song. But there is no licence, no disorder; all is done with order and method, and this gaiety helps, it does not hinder, the more serious question of work. In the cellar are huge vats full of this precious juice, of varying ages, strength, and ripeness. That wine which has been made the longest is the most exquisite in flavour. Bronte wine is already famous throughout Sicily, but the Maniace wine is Bronte *in excelsis*. The grapes are all carefully selected, and the various kinds and growths are kept apart. Not a stalk nor a leaflet is suffered to fall into the press; and the result is wine which, in a few years, will form a feature at English dinner-tables. Year by year this wine improves in flavour; till now some of the older vintages—Burgundies, sherries, Madeiras, and the like—rival the best brands to be found in the most fastidious cellars. It is all perfectly sound wine; mellow, clear, rich, bright; with a bouquet of exquisite delicacy; leaving no after-taste in the mouth, but as clear and pure as when it was still in the grapes. When it finds its way into the London market—which it is to be hoped it will some day—it will be a treat to connoisseurs. No man who has once drunk it would wish to change it for any other; and by contrast, our Maniace brands make French claret taste thin, and French Burgundy coarse. There seems to be something in the fiery heart of volcanic soil which gives a special value to grapes. And if, as has been said, Bronte wine is what it is, when carelessly made, and roughly compounded of skins, stalks, and leaflets, all flung into the vat together, what then must that be from connate soil, where the most scrupulous care is taken at every turn, and the valuable qualities given by nature are helped by the last improvements in science?

E. Lynn Linton.

The Message.

(*Translated from* BALZAC.)

I HAVE long been wishing to relate this true, simple story. On hearing which, a young man and his mistress were seized with such terror that they rushed into each other's arms, like two children clinging closer at the sight of a serpent on the border of a wood. At the risk of lessening the interest of my tale or appearing conceited, I must first state the purpose of my story. I played a part in this almost commonplace drama—if it fail to interest you, it will be as much my fault as that of my narrative. Many true things are supremely dull. Hence, one half of talent consists in selecting from the true what may be made poetic.

In 1819, I was travelling from Paris to Moulins. The state of my purse made it necessary for me to take my seat on the outside of the diligence. You know the English say these are the best places in a coach, and during the early stages of the journey I found abundant reasons to endorse this opinion of our neighbours. A young man who appeared to be more favoured by fortune than I was, therefore from choice no doubt also mounted on the outside, and sat down beside me. He listened with an inoffensive smile to my arguments. By-and-by a certain conformity of age, mind, our enjoyment of the broad, open air, of the varied aspects of the country as they unfolded themselves in the progress of our cumbrous vehicle, lastly a kind of indefinable magnetic attraction, brought about that sort of momentary intimacy to which travellers all the more willingly abandon themselves, seeing this ephemeral feeling must apparently soon come to an end and involves nothing for the future. Before we had proceeded sixty miles we had discussed woman and love, with all requisite oratorical precautions we naturally talked of our own mistresses. Both being still young, we had got no further than the woman of *a certain age*, the woman between thirty-five and forty. Oh! had a poet been listening to us, from Montargis to I don't know what stage, what burning expressions, what enchanting portraits, what delicious secrets he would have carried away! Our chaste fears, murmured interjections, our still bashful looks had an eloquence the simple charm of which I have never since found again.

To understand youth, we must needs be young ourselves, and so on all the essential points of passion we intuitively understood each other. First of all, we began by laying down as a principle, that nothing in the world can be more inane than a certificate of birth; many women of forty are younger than certain women of twenty, and that, in short, women are really only the age they look. This system fixed no term to love, and so in all sincerity we pulled our oars in a limitless ocean. Finally, after showing our mistresses were young, charming, loving, countesses, full of taste, wit, and refinement, after giving them pretty feet, skins as fair and soft as satin, and even delicately perfumed, we owned to each other—he, that Madame So-and-so was thirty-eight; and I, on my side that I adored a woman of forty. Thereupon, both of us feeling delivered from a sort of vague fear, we began our confidences anew, discovering we belonged to the same brotherhood in love, it was who should give the greatest proof of feeling. On a certain occasion one had gone three hundred miles to see his mistress for an hour. The other had risked being taken for a wolf and shot in a park in order to keep a nocturnal rendezvous. In short, we went over all our follies! If there is pleasure in the memory of past dangers, surely there is delight in the memory of vanished joys. Is it not enjoying them twice over? We told everything—our dangers, our great and little episodes of good fortune—all; even our fun and frolics. My friend's countess had smoked a cigar to please him; mine had made my chocolate and never passed a day without writing to me or seeing me; his had spent three days at his house at the risk of ruining her reputation; mine had done still better, or worse if you like. Besides, our husbands adored our countesses, enthralled by the charm all loving women exercise; and with more fatuity than common, imparted just savour enough of danger to enhance our pleasures. Oh! how the wind quickly wafted away our words and quiet laughter.

On arriving at Pouilly, I scrutinised my friend's appearance. Assuredly there was no difficulty in believing he was the object of a serious attachment. Figure to yourself a young man of middle height, of most symmetrical proportions, with a charming physiognomy full of expression. His hair was black, his eyes blue, his lips a faint rose colour, his teeth white and perfectly even; a slight pallor set off his delicate features, and there was a faint dark circle around his eyes as though he were a convalescent. Add to this he had white, finely modelled hands as carefully trimmed as should be those of a pretty woman—he appeared thoroughly well informed, was *spirituel*—and you will

have no difficulty in agreeing with me that my companion might do credit to a countess. Many a girl would covet him for a husband—he was a viscount, had a good income, besides expectations.

At a couple of miles from Pouilly the diligence capsized. My unfortunate companion, to save himself, leaped down upon the edge of a freshly ploughed field instead of holding on to the seat, and following the swing of the diligence as I did. He either made a false spring or slipped. I don't know how the accident occurred, but he was crushed by the coach, which fell on him. We carried him to the house of a peasant. Amid the groans which his agonising tortures forced from him he gave me one of those missions to fulfil, to which the last wishes of a dying man impart a sacred character. In his agony the poor fellow, with that simplicity one is so often the victim of at his age, was miserable at the thought of the shock it would give his mistress were she first to hear of his death through a newspaper. He implored me to break it to her. Then he asked me to take a key that was hung on a ribbon he wore round his neck. I found it embedded in his flesh. The dying man made not the faintest moan as I drew it out with all the care I could from the wound it had made. He had hardly finished giving me the necessary instructions enabling me to find in his house at La Charité-sur-Loire the letters his mistress had written to him and which he entreated me to return to her, when the power of speech failed him midway in a phrase. His last sign was to make me understand that the fatal key would be the token of my mission to his mother. Wretched at being unable to utter a single word of thanks, for he had no doubt of my zeal, he looked at me for a moment with a supplicating eye, bid me adieu by a silent gesture, then bowed his head and died. His death was the only fatal accident occasioned by the upsetting of the coach. Moreover, said the conductor to me, a little of it was his own fault.

At La Charité I executed the verbal testament of my unfortunate fellow-traveller. Fortunately for me his mother was absent. But I had to endure the pain of witnessing the grief of an old servant, who was stunned when I announced the death of her young master; she fell half dead when I produced the key still stained with his blood, but as I was preoccupied by the more bitter anguish of a woman whom fate had robbed of her last love, I left the old housekeeper to her lamentations, and carried away the precious packet, which had been carefully sealed up by my one day's friend.

The château in which the countess lived was upwards of sixteen

miles distant from Moulins, and to reach it in time I had to walk through some private grounds. I had considerable difficulty in discharging my message. For a number of reasons needless to explain, I had only money enough to take me to Moulins. Nevertheless, with the enthusiasm of youth, I resolved to make my way on foot, and to do this with such expedition as would ensure me being beforehand of any rumour of bad news, which we know has the reputation of travelling fast. I inquired the shortest road, and set out along the footpaths of the Bourbonnais, laden, as it were, with a dead body on my shoulders. As I drew near the château, I felt more and more perplexed at the notion of the strange pilgrimage I had undertaken. My imagination teemed with a thousand romantic passions. I pictured to myself all the situations in which it was possible to meet Madame de Montpersan or, according to the poetry of romance, the beloved *Juliet* of the young traveller. I prepared *spirituel* answers to questions I supposed should be addressed to me. At each turn of the wood, at each dip of the road, it was a repetition of the scene of Sosie and his lantern as he gave it an account of the battle. To the disgrace of my heart I thought at first only of my demeanour, of the wit and skill I should exhibit, but as I drew near the neighbourhood a thought flashed through my mind like a thunderbolt breaking a veil of grey clouds. What tidings were these I was bringing this woman, absorbed in the thought of her friend, looking forward from hour to hour to unspeakable joys, after her endless pains to bring him legitimately to her house. Still there was a certain cruel charity in being thus the messenger of death, and I hastened on, bespattered and knee-deep in the mud of the roads of the Bourbonnais. At last I reached a spacious avenue of chestnut-trees, at the end of which, looming out against the sky like a mass of clear-cut, fantastic brown clouds, stood the Château of Montpersan. On reaching the door of the château I found it wide open. This unforeseen circumstance somewhat baffled my plans and anticipations. Nevertheless I entered boldly, and was at once encountered by two dogs, barking as only country dogs can bark. At this noise a servant-woman rushed in, and when I told her I wished to speak to Madame la Comtesse, she pointed to the trees in the English park surrounding the château, and said: "Madame is out there."

"Thank you!" I said in an ironical tone. Her *out there* might have sent me wandering two hours in the park.

A pretty curly-headed little girl in a white frock, pink sash and a plaited pelerine, came up, having heard the question and answer. On seeing me she ran off crying out in a refined little accent: "Mamma, here's a gentleman who wishes to speak to you."

I followed along the winding paths the leaping, skipping white pelerine that like a will-o'-the-wisp showed me the way the little girl had taken.

I must make a full confession. When I reached the last shrub on the avenue I pulled up my collar, brushed my old hat and trousers with the cuffs of my coat, my coat with its sleeves, and my sleeves one with the other. Then I carefully buttoned it that the cloth of the lapel might be seen—this is always a little fresher than the rest; finally, I drew my trousers down over my boots, which I had artistically rubbed in the grass. Thanks to this *toilette de Gascon* I trusted I might not be taken for the itinerant of the sub-prefecture; but now, when in thought I look back to that hour of my youth, I have often a hearty laugh.

Suddenly as I was composing my deportment, at the turn of a green winding, in the midst of a thousand flowers lit by a warm ray of sunshine, I saw Juliet and her husband. The pretty little girl was holding her mother's hand. The countess had evidently hastened her step on hearing the ambiguous phrase of her child. Startled at the sight of a stranger who bowed somewhat awkwardly to her, she stopped, looked at me with an air of cold politeness; an adorable pouting of her lips was a revelation to me of her thwarted hopes. In vain I endeavoured to recall some of the flowery phrases I had so laboriously prepared. During this moment of our common hesitation the husband might join us. A thousand thoughts rushed through my brain. To keep myself in countenance I muttered a few insignificant words asking if the persons present were really Monsieur le Comte and Madame la Comtesse de Montpersan. These commonplaces allowed me time to judge at a glance and analyse with a perspicacity rare at the age I then was, the couple whose solitude I was about so cruelly to disturb. The husband looked the type of gentleman that now-a-days is held to be the brightest ornament of the provinces. He wore a huge pair of thick-soled shoes. I place these foremost, because they struck my eye even more than did his soiled coat, his thread-bare trousers, his loosely tied cravat, his shrunk-up shirt-collar. There was in him a tinge of the magistrate, more of the counsellor of a prefecture, all the importance of a mayor of a department whom nothing can resist, and the sourness of an eligible candidate periodically rejected since 1816, an unimaginable compound of rustic good sense and imbecility; no manners, but all the arrogance of wealth; in subjection to his wife, but fancying himself master, ready to explode at trifles, but knowing nothing of serious matters; for the rest, a withered, wrinkled, tanned face, a few long, lank grey

hairs—such was the man. But the countess! Ah! what a sudden, vivid contrast to her husband. She was a little woman of lithe and graceful dimensions, a figure so charming, dainty and delicate, you might fear to touch it, so fragile did it look. She was dressed in white muslin, a pretty bonnet trimmed with pink ribbons, a pink sash, a chemisette so deliciously filled up by her shoulders and the exquisite outlines of her form, that an almost irresistible longing arose in your heart to possess it all. Her eyes were bright, dark, expressive; her movements gentle, her foot charming. An old roué might have set her down as thirty, such a look of youthfulness was there in her forehead, and in all the dainty details of her head. In character there was a blending of both the Comtesse de Lignolles and of the Marquise de B—— in her: two types of women always fresh in the memory of any young fellow who has read Louvet's romance. I fathomed at once the secrets of this pair, and formed a diplomatic decision worthy of a veteran ambassador. It was perhaps the only occasion in my life in which I exhibited tact, and which enabled me to understand in what the address of courtiers and men of the world consists.

Since these days of *insouciance* I have had too many battles to fight, to think of distilling all the little acts of life, and do nothing but perform the small modulations of etiquette and *bon ton* which dry up the generous emotions.

"Monsieur le Comte, permit me to say a few words to you in private," I said with a mysterious air, taking a few steps backward.

He followed me. Juliet left us to ourselves, and went on her way carelessly, like a woman sure to find out her husband's secrets as soon as she cares to learn them. As briefly as I could I informed the count of the death of my travelling companion. The effect this news produced upon him showed me he had a real affection for his young coadjutor, and the discovery gave me courage to answer him as I did in the dialogue that ensued.

"My wife will be in despair," he exclaimed. "I shall have to use precautions in breaking this painful news to her."

"Monsieur, in addressing myself first to you," I said, "I fulfil a duty. I did not wish to acquit myself of this mission given me by an unknown person to Madame la Comtesse without first speaking to you; but he confided to me a sort of honourable *fidéicommis*, a secret which I have no power to dispose of. After the high opinion of your character that he impressed me with, I thought you would not object to my fulfilling his last wishes. Madame la Comtesse will be at liberty to break the silence imposed on me."

Hearing this eulogy, the gentleman pleasantly nodded his head.

He answered by a very involved compliment, and concluded by allowing me free scope. We retraced our steps. At this moment the dinner-bell rang. I was invited to remain.

Seeing us both looking grave and silent, Juliet furtively scrutinised us. Amazed at seeing her husband devising some frivolous pretext for allowing us a *tête-à-tête* she stopped, casting at me one of those quick, penetrating looks that women only can give. There was in her glance all the curiosity permissible in a mistress of a house receiving a stranger standing there as though he had dropped from the clouds; all the catechisings challenged by my dress, my youth, my physiognomy; strange contrasts! all the disdain of an adored mistress in whose eyes all men save one are as nothing. There were instinctive fears, alarms, the vexation of seeing an unknown guest when she had made arrangements to ensure the bliss of solitude for her love. I interpreted this mute eloquence, and answered it by a sad smile of pity and sympathy. Then for a moment I contemplated her in all the glory of her beauty, as she stood there in the full serenity of the day on the narrow path bordered with flowers. Gazing at this admirable picture, I was unable to restrain a sigh.

"Alas! Madame, I have made a very painful journey, undertaken—for you alone."

"Monsieur!" she said.

"Oh," I replied, "I come in his name who calls you Juliet." She turned pale. "You won't see him to-day."

"He is ill?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Yes," I replied. "But I entreat you to be calm. I am commissioned by him to confide to you certain secrets that concern you; and believe me, never was messenger more discreet or more devoted."

"What is it?"

"If he no longer loved you?"

"Oh, that is impossible!" she exclaimed, letting a smile escape that was anything but frank.

Suddenly she was seized with a kind of shudder. She darted at me a wild, quick look, turned red, and said:

"He is alive?"

My God! What a dreadful word! I was too young to bear the accent this was said in; I could make no answer, but gazed with a stupefied expression at the unhappy woman.

"Monsieur, monsieur! an answer!" she cried.

"Yes, Madame."

"Is it true? Oh, tell me the truth! I can bear it. Tell me. Any pain must be less poignant than this suspense."

My reply was two tears, forced from me by the strange accents in which these words were spoken.

She leaned against a tree, uttering a faint cry.

"Madame," I said, "here is your husband!"

"Have I a husband?"

At these words she fled, and was out of sight.

"Well, the dinner is getting cold," said the count. "Come, Monsieur."

Thereupon I followed the master of the house, who led me into a dining-room, where I found a repast prepared with all the luxury that Parisian tables have accustomed us to. There were five covers: those for the husband and wife, and that of the little girl. *Mine*, that should have been *his*. The fifth was for a canon of Saint Denis, who, when grace was said, asked:

"Where is our dear countess?"

"Oh! she is coming," replied the count, who, after hastily helping us to soup, helped himself to a very ample plateful, and dispatched it with marvellous rapidity.

"Oh! my nephew," exclaimed the canon, "if your wife were here you would be more reasonable."

"Papa will make himself ill," said the little girl with an arch look.

A moment after this gastronomic episode, and just as the count was eagerly carving a piece of venison, the lady's-maid came in and said: "Monsieur, we cannot find Madame."

At these words, I sprang up, dreading some catastrophe, and my countenance so vividly expressed my fears, that the old canon followed me to the garden. The husband, for decency's sake, came as far as the threshold.

"Stay! stay! Don't be uneasy," he cried out to us.

But he came no farther. The canon, the lady's-maid and I hurried along the paths and lawns of the park, calling, listening, the more anxiously as I told them of the young viscount's death. As we went I described the circumstances of the fatal event. I could see that the *femme-de-chambre* was much attached to her mistress. She divined the secret of my apprehensions more clearly than the canon did. We looked into all the fountains and basins, visited every spot, but found neither the countess nor any trace of her passage. At last, going along a wall, I heard low, stifled groans, that seemed to issue from a sort of barn. At all risks I entered. There we found Juliet, who in the instinct of despair had buried herself in the hay; her mouth hidden, impelled by an invincible feeling of shame, to deaden the sound of her agonised cries,—they were the sobs and tears of a child, but more penetrating, more plaintive. There was nothing more in

this world for her. The *femme-de-chambre* raised her mistress, who allowed her to move her about with the nerveless indifference of a dying animal. The girl could say nothing but: "Come, Madame, come."

The old canon asked: "But what's the matter with her? What's the matter, my niece?"

At last, with the aid of the *femme-de-chambre*, I carried Juliet to her room, and recommended her to be carefully watched, and that every one should be told she had a headache. After which the canon and I descended to the dining-room. Some time had elapsed since we quitted the count—I had given him little thought, save at that moment on the peristyle when his indifference struck me—but my astonishment increased when I now found him philosophically sitting at table. He had eaten almost the whole dinner, to the great delight of his daughter, who sat smilingly watching her father's flagrant disobedience of the countess's orders. His strange indifference became intelligible to me through the slight altercation that followed between him and the canon. The count was subjected to a strict regimen imposed by the doctors in treating him for a serious disease, the name of which I forget, and now incited by the fierce gluttony often incidental to convalescence, the appetite of the brute had prevailed over the sensibilities of the man. In one moment I had seen Nature in all her variety, under two very opposite aspects, bringing the comic side of life into the very heart of the most horrible pain. The evening passed sadly. I was tired. The canon exercised his wits endeavouring to guess the cause of his niece's tears. The husband sat silently digesting, satisfied with a rather vague explanation of her indisposition which the countess sent him through her *femme-de-chambre*. We retired early. Passing the door of the countess's bedroom as I followed the valet, who was conducting me to mine, I timidly inquired how she was getting on. Recognising my voice, she bid me enter, and tried to speak to me; but unable to articulate a word, she bowed her head, and I withdrew. Spite of the cruel emotions that I had taken part in with all the simple faith and sincerity of youth, I fell asleep, overcome by the fatigue of my forced march. Late in the night I was awoke by the shrill noise made by the rings of my curtains as they were violently pulled back on their iron rods. There sat the countess at the foot of my bed, with the light of a lamp that had been placed on my table falling full on her face!

"Is it all true, Monsieur?" she said. "I don't see how I am to live after the shock I have received; but at this moment I am calm. I must hear all."

"What—calm!" said I to myself as I looked at the frightful pallor of her complexion contrasting with the brown of her hair, as I listened to the guttural sound of her voice, as I gazed stupefied at the sudden ravages her altered features bore witness to. She sat there shrivelled and colourless as a leaf robbed of the last tint of autumn. Her red swollen eyes, their beauty gone, reflected only bitter, profound grief. You would have said a grey cloud was reflected in what a little while ago the sun was sparkling.

I narrated simply, without laying much stress on certain too painful particulars, the fatal event that had deprived her of her friend. I described our first day's journey, filled with the reminiscences of love. She shed no tears, listened intently, her head bent towards me, like that of an anxious physician scanning pain. Seizing a moment when she appeared to have thrown open her whole heart to suffering, to the wish to plunge into her misery with all the ardour the first fever of despair causes, I told her the fears that had agitated the dying man, told her why and how he had charged me with this fatal message. Her eyes dried under the sombre fire that flashed out from the deepest regions of the soul. She grew paler. When I handed her the letters which I had placed under my pillow, she took them mechanically: then trembling violently, said in a hollow voice: "And I burned his! I have nothing belonging to him! nothing! nothing!"

She struck her forehead.

"Madame," I said. She looked at me with a convulsive movement. "I cut from his head a lock of hair, which I have brought you."

And I handed her this last, this incorruptible relic of him she loved. Ah! if you had received the burning tears that fell on my hands, you would know what gratitude is when it follows so close upon the benefit. She pressed my hands, and with a stifled voice, and look of burning fever, a look in which a momentary happiness gleamed through horrible suffering—

"Ah! you love!" she said. "May you be always happy; never lose her who is dear to you!"

She said no more, and vanished with her treasure.

The next morning this scene of the night, mixed up with my dreams, seemed to me a fiction. To convince myself of its painful truth I looked fruitlessly for the letters under my pillow. It is useless to recount the events of the next day. I remained still some hours with the Juliet so extolled by my poor fellow-traveller. The most trifling words, gestures, actions of this woman,

bore the stamp of that nobility of soul, that delicacy of feeling, that made her one of those blessed creatures of love and devotion so rare on this earth. In the evening the Count de Montpersan accompanied me to Moulins. When we arrived he said with some embarrassment: "Monsieur, if it is not abusing your kindness and acting indiscreetly towards a stranger to whom we are already much indebted, would you be so good, since you are going to Paris, to leave at Monsieur de——" (I forget the name), "Rue du Sentier, a sum of money that I owe him and which he has begged me to forward as soon as possible?"

"Most willingly," I replied.

And in the innocence of my soul I took a roll of twenty-five louis which helped me to return to Paris, and which I faithfully delivered to the correspondent, soi-disant creditor of Monsieur de Montpersan.

It was only at Paris, when I was taking the money to the house indicated, that I saw through the ingenious device by which Juliet had managed to oblige me. The way in which the money was lent me, the delicacy observed towards a poverty easy to be divined—do these not reveal the genius of a loving woman?

What an exquisite pleasure to have been able to relate this adventure to a woman who, in her terror, has pressed you to her heart and said: "Oh! dear one, you must not die!"

Out of the Season.

"But why not? There isn't a soul left in London—who's to see? What harm is there in it?"

"Oh, none of course—a cup of tea is a cup of tea, and whether you drink it here or there, what matter!—only—well, the thing I think of is, would Rowley mind?"

"Mind his own business, I should say, rather! That's what they have to swear to do in the marriage service, haven't they?"

The lady to whom this question was addressed, Mrs. Rowley Dacres, shook her head reprovingly. She was young and very pretty; and Teddy Vere—known among certain of his friends as the Fledgeling—was not averse to seeing her make a pretence of being angry.

"Don't let me hear you speak so flippantly of matrimony," she began severely; "and for your future edification, it is not the man but the *woman* who swears to obey."

"Then why in Heaven's name don't you do as I bid you?"

"As *you* bid me! Come, that's rather strong form, I must say! You're not Rowley, are you?"

"No, worse luck for me, I'm not," and the good-looking fair face put on such an intensely woebegone expression that the resolution of the beholder gave way.

Poor boy! it really was dreadfully unlucky that he should be so desperately in love with her, more especially since Rowley had taken to be absurdly jealous of him, as if—now that she was married—she could ever think seriously of anybody. Only after you'd been brought up—to cut your teeth, as one might say—flirting, well it was just a little bit hard to give it all up at twenty-three. Besides, it wasn't as if she meant anything—except in Rowley's case she never had; and as far as Teddy went, scores of mothers had said before her, dozens of times, that they were only too delighted to see their sons attach themselves to a married lady—it kept them out of harm's way; so that instead of mischief, it was a service she was doing to Teddy. The two had been of the same party during Goodwood week. Teddy had joined them after on board Lord Datchett's yacht at Cowes; and, his leave up, and he forced to stop in London during the end of August, what more natural than that when she came up to town for a few days' shopping, Teddy should offer to act escort to her?—it was

such a pleasure to him, poor fellow! And as there wasn't a single soul left to see them, what harm could there be!

Notwithstanding, the little lady never lost sight of propriety—Garden was always near enough for her to be able to say, "I've my maid with me;" and added to this, Bella Chetwode was in town, very much occupied it's true, but still that same staunch friend, always good at a pinch, who, if told that you had been met going to see her, invariably answered that she expected you. Life is full of surprises, and if one is armed at all points matters go on so much more smoothly.

Now it happened that on the previous evening Teddy had shown visible signs of becoming unruly. He didn't see why he should be sent away. Why could he not stop—stop and have dinner with her?

"Why? Because, in the first place, it wouldn't do; and in the second—I forgot though," she said; "being a man, I ought to have reversed the order—there's nothing to give you."

"That don't matter," said Teddy heroically—"I don't care what I eat."

"Oh, don't you; but I do—you might be wanting to eat me."

Teddy threw a look intended to convey that he could conceive no more delicious morsel.

"There there, say good-bye and go away, do!" she cried. "I declare you're beginning to get cannibalish already."

And in spite of all further entreaties and a goodly show of ill-humour, which experience had taught him to keep handy for display, Teddy was forced to obey her command that he should take his departure.

"I must take care not to let that boy go too far," Nina reflected when he had gone. "He wants his paces pulled up now and then, or else he'll get trying to kick over. However, it's only for a day or two, and then I shall be off; and by next season—oh, he'll have forgotten me, I daresay.

She did not "daresay" anything of the sort—there was a deal too much vanity in her composition to willingly give up any homage that had once been offered to her; but the supposition served as a salve for her conscience, which in the matter was not altogether easy, for in her letters to Rowley, and she wrote to him every day, she had never said a single syllable of having seen Teddy. It was not that she had any wish to be sly with him; but, reasoning in her own way—what good was there in telling any one things which would make them uneasy, and Rowley was such a good fellow, so wrapped up in and devoted to her,—he'd be wretched if she told him that Teddy was in town and came to see her every day. No; where ignorance was bliss it was folly to let it interfere with fishing; much better let Rowley continue in peace and tranquillity; and on Saturday he and

she were to join each other at the Twyford Junction, on their way to Scotland to pay a heap of visits together, some new gowns for which had brought her to London; and her face softened with a smile that flitted across it as she assured herself that ten minutes with Rowley would make her forget the very existence of Teddy. Poor infatuated boy!

Possibly Mrs. Dacres' velvety brown eyes would have opened a trifle wider could she have followed the footsteps of her devoted admirer. Teddy, wise in his generation, made the provision of a consolation a matter of principle; therefore when the door closed behind him at one house, he quickly hailed a hansom which should take him to another, where he would not only be welcomed, but instead of having to beg for a dinner he would be begged to eat one. Matters turned out as he premised, and he only picked up his grievance against Nina the next day when he was urging her that they should go to his rooms and have tea.

When this proposition was started Teddy wasn't particularly keen as to whether she came or whether she did not; but, as ill luck would have it, Nina chose that very opportunity for asserting her dignity—and after that the question of the tea became a question of who should be conqueror.

"If I give in again, I'll be hanged," said Teddy to himself, and he brought to bear the various resources he was master of with such effect that Nina, driven into a corner, was fairly beaten and confessed to herself that it served her right—"he's been allowed to go too far, and this is the upshot of it."

She made these reflections however with a face that told no tales, stepped into a hansom with a pretty air of being overruled by a will stronger than her own, and only insisted on keeping up her ungainly sized parasol because "the sun in one's eyes is so disagreeable."

Now, as chance would have it, instead of fishing in the country, Captain Rowley Dacres was spending that day in London. Circumstances had brought him to town early in the morning; but, to his discredit do I tell it, he hated shopping, and hadn't Nina told him in every letter she sent that she was with the dressmaker every hour of the day? If he went home he should have to go with her there, or to some other confounded place, for so long as a shop was near, Nina would be safe to have something to buy in it. During those few months they were engaged, what a purgatory he had gone through. He was a lover then—he was a husband now, and he whistled the air of a popular tune known by the name of "Not for Joe."

The first few bars had but just escaped him, when who should he stumble across but an old chum, Nick Walcot, who, hearing that up to seven o'clock—when he was goi ng to pop in upon Nina—Rowley

had nothing to do, gave a mysterious wink of his eye saying, "All right, old fellow; I'm going somewhere, and I'll take you."

The somewhere proved to be a small bijou residence in the neighbourhood of Thurloe Square; and, arrived at the door, it suddenly struck Rowley who lived there.

"Oh come, I say," he began, drawing back a step or two. "I don't half think this'll do. I'm married now, you see, and I've given up this sort of society."

Nick looked at him with an air of injured surprise.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "There's nothing against Miss Fisher that I know of; it's simply that I've been asked to lunch with her, and as I know she'll have a friend, I take ditto because I'd rather sit down four than three." Rowley hastened to disabuse any prejudice against Miss Fisher, whom he felt sure was the very soul of propriety, "Only, don't you know, women get an idea, and though my little wife's the best sort in the world, if she got scent that I'd been lunching with an actress instead of going straight off to her, there'd be the very deuce to pay."

"Fiddle de dee! besides, how is she to know? who's to tell her?" And before there was time to answer, a vigorous pull was given to the bell.

"Confound this fellow; I wish I'd gone straight off to Nina. What a fool I am!" These were the reflections of Captain Dacres as he followed his friend into the presence of Miss Fisher, who received him with easy cordiality.

"Good gracious on me! Captain Dacres," she said, "what a time it is since I've seen you, to be sure; I took it for granted you were dead."

"Dead!" repeated Nick Walcot. "Why, he's married; didn't you know?"

"Oh, it's about the same to me," laughed the lady, and then tilting herself back in her chair so that her voice might reach the further room more easily, she called, "Doady I say, come in here—there's a surprise for you."

And in answer to the summons a young lady appeared, who threw herself into a dramatic attitude, exclaiming, "What! Captain Dacres! Well I never! Why—who'd a thought of seeing you?"

Certainly it was not Captain Dacres who had anticipated that pleasure, for while responding with the best grace he could command to the chaff and banter which began to be darted at him, he was consigning Miss Fisher, and more especially the effusive Doady, to every depth between this world and the one below.

The announcement of luncheon opened a more cheerful vista. "Here I am, and I must make the best of it," thought Rowley following, in company with Doady, Nick Walcot, and Miss Fisher. "But

if ever anything of the sort happens again may I be tarred and feathered. To think I ever thought this woman pretty, and to fancy that to this day Nina is jealous of her."

The luncheon, commenced at an unusually late hour, took a long time getting through; the two ladies were excellent company, and notwithstanding the invectives he had indulged in, five o'clock struck very quickly. Then it was discovered that everybody was going the same way, and it ended with two hansoms being called. Miss Fisher and Nick Walcot got into one, Captain Rowley and Doady Donne occupied the other.

"How tiresome the sun is, let me put up your parasol?" said our friend Rowley, with evident anxiety to screen her; but Doady begged he wouldn't trouble.

"I don't mind the sun a bit," she said. "And I'm not in the least afraid of any one seeing me, because evidently since you've married you've grown so very respectable."

"Confound her," ejaculated Rowley mentally, and he congratulated himself on the emptiness of London, resolving to keep his head well back and sit a little on one side as they went through Piccadilly. Doady asked a question about some friend in whom she had formerly felt an interest; this led to past reminiscences and the telling of some good story, over which Rowley was still laughing when there came a crash, followed by a bump and a swaying forward and back. "Hang the fellow, he's run into another hansom!"

In an instant Rowley had dexterously jumped out on to the pavement; the occupant of the other hansom, whose wheel was locked into theirs, obeying the same instinct, had done the same.

"Why, if it aint Teddy Vere. Oh my!" ejaculated one feminine voice shrilly, while from under a red parasol, still open, another groaned, "Rowley! it can't be! Oh, what will become of me?"

Self-preservation is the first law of nature; the woman who hesitates is lost. Before another minute had passed Nina was out of one cab and into another close by.

"Drive off as fast as you can—never mind where! I'll tell you when we get further on," and five minutes later she gave the cabman the address of Mrs. Chetwode's house.

Bursting into the room she cried, "Oh, Bella, such a horrible thing has occurred! Do help me." And she told her the whole story, ending by saying, "I left word at home, when I went out, that I was going to see you."

Mrs. Chetwode said something by way of calming her, and then she rang the bell.

"Tell Martin to go to Mrs. Dacres', and say she will not return to dinner, I've prevailed on her to stop with me. Now, my dear, try and keep calm and put on the best face you can, and we must trust to Providence to help us through."

"But suppose he saw me?"

"Oh, no, we'll suppose he didn't see you; and I think you may trust to Teddy—he's got his head screwed on the right way."

Nina wiped away the tears which had flowed over. "Nothing can excuse me for being so imprudent," she said with a half sob; "all the time I knew how wrong it was of me; and the worst is, Bella, I didn't care."

"Didn't care! How?"

"I mean I didn't care for Teddy. What could a boy like that possibly be to me? Why, of course I love Rowley dearly—more than I could tell you; and to think I should risk it all in this stupid way. Oh! it's my abominable vanity; that's what it is. Aunt Jane always said it would be my ruin, and so it will be—after this, you see, Rowley will believe anything of me? Oh, Bella, what shall I do? I shall die."

"Well, my dear, it's the best thing that could happen to you if you are going to behave in this absurd manner." Mrs. Chetwode saw that strong measures must be resorted to; she quite intended reading Nina a lecture; but the time to do so was not now. "There's no doubt but that you *have* been imprudent, *very;* but if I am to help you it's not by letting you sit there and cry."

"Wh-at do you wish me to do?"

"To dry your eyes and come down with me to dinner and chat away as we always do. If your husband was going home Martin will bring back word that he is there, or else he will come here and fetch you."

"You took the message?" Mrs. Chetwode asked as the two ladies descended to dinner.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Really, Nina, I ought to have ordered a better dinner for you."

"Oh, I'm not a bit hungry."

"But you ought to be after going about so much as we have to-day. By-the-by, how did you decide about that hat I saw; do you think it will suit you? Describe it to me."

Forced to answer, Nina was trotted by her friend from one subject of toilette to the other, until in the midst of a got-up argument concerning trimmings, there came a thundering knock at the door.

"Dear bless me! What a late visitor! Who can it be? Martin, just go out and look—never mind the door," and Mrs. Chetwode

jumped up and stood so that she could hear the inquiry: "Is Mrs. Dacres here?"

"Yes sir, the ladies are at dinner."

"Oh! Ah!"

"Captain Dacres, is that you?" Bella had run out to meet him. "Why, what a surprise—Nina, fancy, here's your husband, dear," and she preceded Rowley back into the dining-room.

"Rowley!" For her life Nina couldn't say more—every atom of colour had forsaken her.

"My dear child, have I frightened you? I'm so sorry, but I found after all I had to come to town. Carne has made such an awful mess about the gun he was to get for me, and so I didn't write. I thought I'd surprise you."

Nina laughed out like a boisterous child. "What a silly thing I am," she said, "I was afraid something had happened."

Rowley put his arm round her, for though she was laughing, her voice sounded like crying all the time.

Under other circumstances he might have been more struck with the little embarrassment which she could not perfectly control, but at the moment he was not quite himself either. That impudent Doady Donne had played a shameful hoax on him, had actually had the audacity to declare that she had seen his wife—Nina, Mrs. Dacres—in Teddy Vere's hansom! He hadn't taken what she said very pleasantly, for the bare notion made him furious, and—though telling himself all the while that he didn't believe it—until he had found Nina seated with her friend, it was impossible to feel any security.

"'Pon my life, it's too bad!" he was saying mentally. "I don't know what things are coming to; there ought to be a stop put to it, a line must be drawn somewhere; and such women oughtn't to be permitted to speak of a lady in that chaffy way."

While these reflections occupied his mind he was giving scraps of news to Nina, and answering Mrs. Chetwode, who was frankly saying that she hadn't a morsel of dinner to give him.

"But I don't want any, I've only just had a most enormous luncheon."

"Luncheon! Where?"

"Why, my dear, at the station—ham, beef, beer—you know—veal pie—that sort o' thing."

"Rowley! how could you! You'll be awfully ill, you know."

"Not a bit of it, not I. I——" but at this moment rat-tat-a-tat-tat went the knocker.

Oh! agony—there wasn't a doubt this was Teddy!

"I say, what a game—here's another visitor!" remarked Captain Dacres cheerily.

"One who is expected, I shouldn't wonder." Mrs. Chetwode, as usual, rose equal to the emergency. "We may as well let the cat out of the bag, Nina, and tell him.—We've got a young man coming to take us to the play," and turning to Martin she said, "Show him into the boudoir if that's Mr. Vere."

"Mr. Vere! What, Teddy! Here, stop, I'll open the door!" exclaimed Rowley hastily. "Don't you go.'

"But why?" interposed Mrs. Chetwode amazedly.

"Because it's interrupting you so awfully in your dinner. No, no, we'll go upstairs together—it'll be all right you'll see."

He was already in the hall, had opened the door—their voices, laughing it seemed—sounded together.

"What can it mean?" said Nina anxiously.

"Never mind; one thing is certain—he didn't see you."

"Perhaps it's the beer—he seems a little excited, don't you think?"

"I'm not going to leave them together. Teddy," called out Mrs. Chetwode, "come in here. Have you brought tickets for the Comedy?"

"Tickets, eh?"

"Oh, it's no use disguising; we've——"

"No, no!" broke in Rowley, "not a bit, I know all about it, old fellow; they've told me what you've come to do—I'll go with you. By Jove, capital idea! Ha, ha."

"Oh, it must be the beer," thought Nina, and catching Bella's eye she tapped her forehead with her finger to indicate that there was no doubt but that Rowley's head was slightly affected.

"Mrs. Chetwode, I'm awfully sorry," began Teddy, "but do you know, I've made such a mess about the Comedy; they aint playing that piece at all there now. I hope you'll both forgive me."

"How tiresome! What a naughty boy you are!" said Bella. "Now there's nothing for us to do."

"Nothing to do," said Rowley. "Not a bit of it; we aint going to be stumped for one failure; we'll go somewhere—where shall it be, Nina, eh?"

"Any place you like, dear," so long as I am with you, the big brown eyes seemed to say; and Rowley, looking back again, thought, "And I could doubt her—bless her heart, the darling!" while Nina kept repeating, "This will be a lesson for me as long as I live. Never again, no more flirtation—never, never, never!"

Later in the evening when it was decided that they should all go to the Fisheries, without hesitation as to the other two, Nina and Rowley went off together.

"Are we to follow the turtle doves?" said Teddy with sarcasm.

"As you please," said Bella, "but it doesn't in the least matter—you know I've a scolding in store for you, Teddy?"

"No, not now," and he held up his hands pleadingly.

"Yes, but you've been most imprudent, and it's by the very greatest luck in the world that Rowley didn't see you. If he had, it would have been anything but pleasant for Nina."

"Hm!" and Teddy gave his nose a screw. He was terribly tempted to tell what he looked on as the very best joke in the world—only—well—no—perhaps better not—if you once let a thing slip out it often gets spoken of, nobody knows how; and as Rowley had whispered at the door, "Teddy, I say, not a word about having seen me before," and he had answered "Honour bright, old chap; you may trust to me," he'd keep the matter dark; only there was one to score against Miss Doady Donne for telling him last night at dinner that she was going to play propriety to a friend that day. He hated a lie without a reason; and as it seemed to him he'd gone quite far enough in that direction, this would serve as a capital peg to hang a quarrel on.

"Shall we say good-night?" said Bella.

"Do you want to get rid of me?"

"N-no."

"Oh, I see you do," and he held out his hand to her.

"Good-night," she began, trying to hold herself very severely, "and let this little adventure be a lesson to you. All's well that ends well, but remember *all* doesn't always end so."

"Quite true," he said, feigning to have listened penitently, "By-the-way, would you mind repeating that same little sermon to our friend Rowley?—it might be of service to him. What do I mean?—oh nothing—only that one good turn deserves another."

The Wisdom of Goethe.

HALF a century ago Carlyle had to write of Goethe, who had just then died, that he had won but little recognition in England.

"Indeed," he says, "it was only of late that his existence as a man, and not as a mere sound, became authentically known to us; and some shadow of his high endowments and endeavours, and of the high meaning that might lie therein, arose in the general mind of England, even of intelligent England. Five years ago to rank him with Napoleon, like him as rising unattainable beyond his class, like him and more than he of quite peculiar moment to all Europe, would have seemed a wonderful procedure; candour even, and enlightened liberality, to grant him place beside this and the other home-born ready-writer, blessed with that special privilege of 'English cultivation,' and able thereby to write novels, heart-captivating, heart-rending, or of enchaining interest."*

That sneer at Scott, who had himself then fallen on evil days, poor fellow! was unjust and unnecessary. Scott was the last of men to set himself up beside such a giant as Goethe, for whom, indeed, he himself had a great and hearty admiration, and had moreover done what in him lay to lead others into the same way of thinking. It is pleasant to know that the feeling was mutual, and that even in England there was no warmer admirer of the immortal novels than Goethe. But in other respects Carlyle was right. Up to a very few years before his death the mass even of intelligent Englishmen knew Goethe very little and very ill. They knew him chiefly, indeed, from a worthless translation of 'Werther,' a work which in its original form has been, perhaps, a little overrated, but in its English form went certainly far to justify the illiberal sneers of Jeffrey, and of other "old-established British critics," as Carlyle called them. Carlyle himself, by his translation of 'Wilhelm Meister' and by various articles in 'Fraser' and the 'Foreign Quarterly Review,' had laboured hard to bring about a better state of things. But the fierce and bullying tone he too often adopted, as well, no doubt, as the strange jargon in which he loved to conceal his meaning, probably closed many ears against his preaching; and besides, Carlyle himself had in those days, as we all know, some difficulty in getting a hearing. However, even

* 'Miscellaneous Essays;' vol. iv. People's Editions. "Goethe's Works," reprinted from the 'Foreign Quarterly Review,' No. 19.

as he wrote the words we have quoted, the tide was beginning to turn. The progress of clearer apprehension, he was even then able to own, was becoming quicker and more satisfactory. In his own extravagant language he exults that

"Innumerable unmusical voices have already fallen silent on this matter; for in fowls of every feather, even in the pertest choughs and thievish magpies, there dwells a singular reverence of the eagle; no Dulness is so courageous, but if you once show it any gleam of a heavenly Resplendence it will, at lowest, shut its eyes and say nothing."

Mrs. Austin did a good deal to silence these unmusical voices, no doubt, with her charming volumes on Goethe and his contemporaries!* Mr. Hayward, too, helped by that translation of 'Faust' which has received Mr. Matthew Arnold's stamp as "the best that has been made in our language, because the most straightforward." And the turn having once come, the tide has risen steadily, nor, despite some Partingtonian opposition here and there, has it ever shown any visible sign of ebb. In France, indeed, for all the vigorous protests of Goethe's against the excesses of the romantic school, the chorus of praise, of which Napoleon struck the keynote with his "There is a man!" in the famous interview at Erfurt, has never faltered, and the two great critics of modern France, M. Sainte-Beuve and M. Scherer, each after his own manner, have both held the great German up to admiration in their best style, not only as a great poet, but as a great critic, of life as well as of literature. It is on this side, too, of his many-sided fame, that English criticism has preferred in recent years mainly to dwell. Both in prose and verse the graceful Muse of Mr. Matthew Arnold has lavished some of the richest treasures of her vocabulary on the "wisest and most helpful thinker of modern times."† Mr. Hutton has gone still further, and pronounced him to be, with some reservations which we shall return to elsewhere, "perhaps the wisest man whom the world has ever seen." Enormous as is the mass of literature that has been raised round the figure of Goethe in his own country, the English language alone could certainly now furnish no contemptible addition to the pile.

Carlyle, as we have said, led the way, and a countryman of Carlyle's has now followed in his footsteps. Whatever may be their relative value as "dynamic forces," Professor Blackie has at least proved himself as sincere in his admiration for Goethe as his illustrious com-

* 'Goethe and his Contemporaries,' from the German of Falk, von Müller, &c., with biographical notices and original anecdotes illustrative of German literature. By Sarah Austin: in 3 vols. 2nd. edit. London, 1836.

† See especially "Memorial Verses," vol. 2 of his 'Poems,' ed. 1877; and "A French Critic on Goethe"—'Mixed Essays,' 1879.

patriot, if less tumultuous. He has, moreover, this advantage—and a great advantage, indeed, it is in these days when, as the Manager in 'Faust' says, the people read a terrible deal, if not always of the best—he is so much easier to read! In the little volume * whose title we have borrowed for our article, he has packed within most convenient compass a veritable treasure-house of wisdom. The first book printed in the English language was, we believe, 'The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers,' sent out by Caxton from his press at Westminster more than four hundred years ago; and this little book might well have been ushered into the world under the same style. Full of wise thoughts and sayings in truth it is, ranging over the whole expanse of human life and conduct; whatsoever men concern themselves with, in thought or action, fact or fancy, work or play, nothing was too high for Goethe, nothing too low. As he himself says, in a verse thus Englished by Professor Blackie: †

"Nothing may perish
Beneath the sky;
All things have their issues,
That mortals try.
We are here for a day,
To stamp on the clay
A part of ourselves
That never may die."

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Professor Blackie has chosen this verse from Proverbs for the motto to his volume, and he has chosen happily. But had he wished to take one also from profane writ, how aptly would have served the well-known lines from Juvenal ‡ which Lord Beaconsfield took for one of his books—a *farrago*, surely, if nothing else!

The age, our good Professor thinks, as so many thoughtful men have said of their age before him, lacks seriousness. These are his words:

"There is nothing fills me with more sorrow occasionally than to see how foolishly some people throw away their lives. It is a noble thing to live; at least a splendid chance of playing a significant game—a game which we may never have the chance to play again, and which it is surely worth the while to try to play skilfully; to bestow at least as much pains upon as many a one does on billiards or lawn-tennis. But these pains are certainly not always given; and so the game of life is lost, and the grand chance of forming a manly character is gone; for no man can play a game well who leaves his moves to chance; and so, instead of fruitful victories,

* 'The Wisdom of Goethe.' By John Stuart Blackie, Emeritus Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. Blackwood: 1883.

† Ibid. p. 43.

‡ Sat. i. 85–6.

brilliant blunders are all the upshot of what many a record of distinguished lives has to present."*

This necessity of seriousness Goethe himself was never tired of inculcating. "Without earnestness," he says, in a passage quoted in this book—†

"Without earnestness there is nothing to be done in life; yet even among the people whom we call men of culture, but little earnestness is often to be found: in labours and employments, in arts, nay, even in recreations, they plant themselves, if I may say so, in an attitude of self-defence; they live, as they read a heap of newspapers, only to be done with them. They remind one of that young Englishman at Rome, who told, with a contented air, one evening in some company, that 'to-day he had despatched six churches and two galleries.' They wish to know and learn a multitude of things, and not seldom exactly those things with which they have the least concern; and they never see that hunger is not appeased by snapping at the air. When I become acquainted with a man my first inquiry is: with what does he occupy himself, and how, and with what degree of perseverance? The answer regulates the interest I take in that man for life."

And again:

"I reverence the individual who understands distinctly what he wishes; who unweariedly advances, who knows the means conducive to his object, and can seize and use them. How far his object may be great or little, may merit praise or censure, is a secondary consideration with me. A great part of all the misery and mischief that we find in the world arises from the fact that men are too remiss to get a proper knowledge of their object in life, and when they do know it, to work intensely in attaining it. They seem to me like people who have taken up a notion that they must and will erect a tower, and who yet expend on the foundation no more material and labour than would be sufficient for a hut."‡

How Goethe would have rejoiced in Walter Raleigh, to whom, broken in health, fame, and fortune, and standing at the very gate of death, even his bitterest enemy could not refuse this praise, that *he could labour terribly!*

For this prevailing defect, then, of lightness and flippancy, the only remedy the Professor knows is "to impress on young men with all seriousness, that life, though a pleasant thing, is no joke, and that if they will go to sea without chart, compass, or pilot, they have a fair chance to be wrecked."§

But for this impression to be deep and lasting, to be itself *serious*, it is above all things necessary that it be conveyed by one having a recognised authority. For the individual, "like the great world, is governed, as Goethe well says, by wisdom, by authority, and by show; and though wisdom is wisely put first in this trial of directing powers,

* 'The Wisdom of Goethe,' p. ix.
† Ibid. p. 5.
‡ Ibid. p. 4.
§ Ibid. p. x.

it is an authority that the great masses of men have to rely on, when they look out, as they must do, in nine cases out of ten, for a guidance outside of their own experience; for authority in the force that wisdom must always take, before it can become generally recognised, and become permanently influential."*

"Every age," he goes on, "has its own authority, as in other regions, so specially in the domain of the conduct of life; and in the present age I have found no name whose utterances have a better chance to be generally accepted than the great German poet-thinker, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His wisdom is generally acknowledged, even by those who entertain the most unfavourable views of his character: and having in my own personal experience had reason to thank God that at an early period of my life I became acquainted with the writings of this great man, it occurred to me that I could do no better service to the intelligent youth of this generation, for whose benefit it has been my duty and my pleasure to work through a long life, than to lay before them in a systematic form his most significant dicta on the important problems of sound thinking and noble living."†

How the good work thus eloquently and earnestly announced has been performed, the book exists to tell. For ourselves we cannot hope to give any idea of it other than such as we have already vaguely foreshadowed. Did we once begin to quote we should know not where or when to stop. As the child in the fable who strayed into fairy-ground, and lured on by flower after flower, each brighter and lovelier than the last, found himself at last cut off from all hope of return, so would it be with us. Page after page should we turn, finding here some grave moral truth too weighty almost for words to hold, and there some light thrust at the

"Fears of the great, and follies of the wise,"

which, like the laughing wisdom of Horace,

"Plays lightly round and round the peccant part,
And wins unfelt an entrance to the heart:"

anon some large utterance of good-will and charity to all men, and then again some sharp reproof of ignorance or presumption, or idleness: of whatsoever things, indeed, are not, as the apostle says, convenient. And so should we go on from quotation to quotation, till we had transcribed the best part of the whole book, thereby depriving this good Professor of his lawful dues, and for ourselves incurring, perhaps, some fearful penalty in the mysterious Court of Copyright!

Perhaps the most attractive part of the book to young minds, especially to those already touched, as so many young minds now are touched, with a taste for letters, and yearning to venture out themselves into that alluring but so sadly crowded field, will be that which treats

* 'The Wisdom of Goethe,' p. x. † Ibid.

of art, of literature, and of poetry. On such subjects Goethe was indeed supreme; the greatest critic of all ages Mr. Matthew Arnold has called him, and it would be hard indeed to name a greater. Here the temptation to quote is almost irresistible. It is indeed to be resisted only, as an Irishman might say, by quoting; but this time for a quotation we shall go, not to the pages of this excellent little book, but straight to their great source itself. In the very best selection ever made or to be made from the works of any considerable writer, each reader will find something to add, if not something to take away. In the present instance there is really nothing that we should wish to take away; but, though we should never dream of claiming an equal knowledge of Goethe's works with this wise Scotch Professor, there are one or two additions we could make, and especially in this particular department. Goethe is rarely more felicitous than when counselling, from the height of his years and experience, those young writers who, like the little bears, have all their troubles yet to come. Nor, in truth, young writers only: there are many notable figures in contemporary literature no longer owning to that epithet, (which seems, indeed, in the world of literature to carry with it some mysterious note of discourtesy,) who might do worse than lay to heart some of the sage's wisdom. Two samples of these, unrecorded by Professor Blackie, we shall venture to quote. The first is from 'Faust,' from that strange scene in the witches' kitchen, which has so sadly puzzled many learned heads, and to which perhaps Goethe himself supplied the best commentary when he said, "Really people should learn when they are young to make and take a joke, and to throw away scraps as scraps." What with the vision of Margaret in the glass, the uncouth antics of the apes and their Babylonish jargon, Faust declares that he feels his senses leaving him, and even Mephistopheles owns that his well-seasoned brain is growing giddy. Then the apes break into the following chant, which runs thus in Mr. Anster's version:

"We have words, and we can link
Syllables that chime and chink;
Sense unsought—thus is caught;—
Every jingle is a thought—
Every word with meaning fraught—
Language glib and random, thus
Does the work of thought for us;
Let but your own fancy mingle
With the jargon and the jingle,
As you listen to the lays;
Bring the meaning you are gleaning,
Give the poet all the praise."

The other dates, indeed, from the wild and restless period of Goethe's youth, but yet very strikingly foreshadows the depth and

sanity of his manhood. In 1771, when Goethe, then two-and twenty years old, was nominally studying law at Strasburg, the name of Shakespeare was the battle-cry for all those young heroes of revolt against "the established fact" in art, literature, religion, morals, and everything else, who, taking their name from some forgotten masterpiece of one of their chiefs, were known to their startled elders as the *Sturm und Drang*, or Storm and Stress, School. Before this time the so-called classical school of France, of which Voltaire was then the great apostle, had been the source from which Germany drew such culture as she then possessed. Lessing was the first to break from this ignoble bondage. In his 'Dramaturgie,' a series of essays originally designed to chronicle the performances of the new Hamburg theatre, but soon spreading far beyond that narrow and uncongenial field, he dared to wrest the dramatic crown from the author of 'Semiramis,' and place it on the head of the "drunken savage" who had created 'Hamlet.' Shakespeare then was hardly known in Germany. Wieland's translations, or rather paraphrases, had, indeed, been written, but the critics, Lessing tells us, spoke ill of them, and the general public, as usual, followed the critics. Eager to break at every possible and impossible point from the old-established routine of criticism, as of everything else, these ardent young spirits welcomed Wieland as the Baptist of a new Messiah. A Shakespeare Society was formed, and the young neophytes took it in turns to deliver orations in honour of their new god. It is from one of these we shall take our next quotation, borrowing the English version of George Henry Lewes: *

> "Up, gentlemen! sound the alarm to all noble souls who are in the elysium of so-called good taste, where drowsy in tedious twilight they are half alive, half not alive, with passions in their hearts and no marrow in their bones; and because they are not tired enough to sleep, and yet are too idle to be active, loiter and yawn away their shadowy life between myrtle and laurel bushes."

It is possible that not only those intelligent youths for whom this book has been primarily composed, but some of their intelligent elders might suck from these words no small advantage.

There is, indeed, but one part of this excellent little volume that we could wish away, or, let us rather say, that we could wish had been written differently; and that is, the estimate of Goethe's character. It is couched in so charming a strain of admiration and sympathy that we could be willing to go along with every word of it; but, in truth, on this point, the Professor claims a little too much for the sage. To assert that Goethe was pre-eminently great on his moral as well

* 'Life of Goethe,' 3rd ed. pp. 92–5.

as his intellectual side is surely to go a little too far. We said just now that Mr. Hutton's high estimate of Goethe was accompanied with certain reservations; his summing-up is as follows: "He was perhaps the wisest man, *totally without moral humility and personal faith*, whom the world has ever seen!" * Professor Blackie, on the other hand, holds that he well deserves "to be studied by our generation, and handed down to long generations, as *the model of a perfectly wise and virtuous man*." If there be any meaning in the English language these two estimates cannot be made to agree, and any one who has really studied Goethe's life and character will hardly, we think, be inclined to dispute the justice of the former. Among the many ill-considered sayings that Carlyle permitted himself on this and other subjects, was one to the effect that Goethe, like Shakespeare, has left little trace of himself in his works. Nothing could well have been further from the mark. By those who have eyes to see he may be traced in almost every line of those works, and that there may be no doubt about the matter he himself has clearly indicated the path for us in his conversations with Eckermann, in his correspondence with Schiller and others, even in his 'Autobiography,' though there of course much allowance must be made for the sunset haze through which the old man looked back on the glorious morning of his long life. If the young generation for whom this example is held up are to accept him as the model of a *perfectly virtuous man*, it is possible that they may go a little astray. It is not likely that many of them at least will have their model's perfect wisdom, and without that, to counteract the falling away from perfect virtue which he certainly at times exhibited, it is extremely likely that they will be found falling away still further and more frequently. So much, indeed, Professor Blackie himself allows when he says, "The quick and ready susceptibility of which we have just spoken, might naturally have led—and has, in fact, not seldom led—poetic natures into a sort of emotional dissipation and abandonment, which, if it does not end in vice and moral ruin, is certainly fatal to all true manhood;" † and allowing so much, it is surprising to find him, while laying his finger with such sureness on the weakness of the young generation, still venturing the risk of so perilous an example. A vicious man, or an irreligious man, in the popular sense of the words, Goethe certainly was not; from such excesses as Byron's for example, from such extravagances as Shelley's, his good sense and good taste alike saved him. He had, as Mr. Hutton happily says, a *taste* for religion, and he had a taste for virtue, too, just as he had a taste for everything that was good

* 'Essays Theological and Literary'—"Goethe and his Influence." 2nd Ed. 1877.

† 'The Wisdom of Goethe,' p. xxxiv.

and fair. But he liked to see and prove everything for himself. He would take nothing upon trust. This active spirit of inquiry led him to those wonderful heights of wisdom whereon no man, at least among the moderns, has ever planted his foot so firmly. But it also led him at times into certain byways and strange places wherein perfect virtue is hardly to be found. And in these places he was not averse to linger as the fancy seized him.

But to put virtue and religion out of the question—and has not Cardinal Newman lately reminded us how difficult it is to attach any precise definition to the sense of religion?—there was another side of Goethe's character to which he indisputably owed much of his greatness, but which would no less certainly form a perilous model to the young generation. Goethe was, perhaps, the most extraordinarily selfish man of whom the world has kept record. Selfish, in the common sense of the word, indeed, he was not. "Goethe's heart," said one who knew him well, and owed him much, "which few knew, was as great as his intellect, which all knew." His was a splendid selfishness. It was not, like poor Byron's, again, a vulgar, an ignoble selfishness; it was an intellectual selfishness, not a sensual one.* The ways in which the love of self manifested itself in these two men might perhaps be paralleled by the different cruelty of Marius and Sylla. Both from head to foot were dyed in human blood; but Marius slaughtered from innate savagery and lust of rule; Sylla because he had formed a certain political ideal, an impossible but not ignoble ideal, to which all else must give place. Man, woman, and child, whoever came, or might at some time come, between him and this ideal, must go. It was so with Goethe. He had formed an intellectual ideal on which his eyes were ever fixed, to which his steps were ever bent. To the right and to the left he had a hand and a heart for all humanity, but between him and his ideal no man nor woman must intervene. As far as it is possible for human endeavour to succeed Goethe succeeded.

* His conduct to Friederike might, perhaps, take a harder name. Yet his latest biographer seems to view it not only with lenient, but even with admiring eyes. "In this strait to which his heedlessness had brought him, he gave up the happiness of his heart to save his intellectual development—infinitely painful as it was to sacrifice with his own happiness that of the tender sick girl who loved him, and who, he felt, could never belong to any other. It was a hard struggle. From the first there was no doubt of the issue; but still it was hard." And again: "Wolfgang with bleeding heart gave up Friederike that he might not lose himself. It was his first great renunciation—in truth a tragic one; for one of the noblest women—one worthy of the highest happiness—was almost heart-broken by it." See Düntzer's 'Life of Goethe,' translated by Thomas W. Lyster, vol. i. pp. 146-7. Macmillan: 1883.

"And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness."*

He put miles out of sight behind him the tumultuous, extravagant, sentimental Goethe of the old Strasburg days—the days of 'Werther' and of 'Gotz von Berlichingen,' days of riot and revolt, from which, indeed, he drew some good, as he did from everything, but of which he cared but little in the after-time to talk; and, like the prince in the fairy tale, pressed steadily upwards and onwards to those stern and lofty mountain peaks whence spring the magic waters of knowledge. A wonderful life! a wonderful course! a course which, indeed,

". . . few sons of men
May think to emulate."†

A life magnificent, incomparable in its results, but one which surely it were hardly wise to hold up to the young of this generation, at least, as a model of perfect virtue. They have their own Strasburg days; how few seem likely ever to get beyond them!

"I have not been anxious to cloak his human failings," says Professor Blackie.‡ Human his failings were, most human; happy the man who has no other and no worse than he. Nevertheless they existed, and for us are what they are. With all young copyists it is the bad, and not the good, points of their model on which their eyes will most quickly fasten, which their hands will most easily produce. How many are there might copy the failings of Goethe, and claim excuse, if indeed, in their pride, they thought excuse were needed, because they were the failings of such a man!

We cannot then but think that in claiming so much for Goethe, Professor Blackie has a little overshot his mark.§ For the model of perfect wisdom where, indeed, may a better be found! but when we are asked to accept the perfect virtue, we are inclined to "smiling, put the question by." And can we not put it by? When a great man is in the grave, and has left great works behind him, may we not

* "Memorial Verses:" Mr. Matthew Arnold's 'Poems,' vol. ii. p. 223. Ed. 1879.

† "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'"—Mr. Matthew Arnold's 'Poems,' p. 280.

‡ The Wisdom of Goethe,' p. lxxxiii.

§ The same error, it may here be remarked, pervades Herr Düntzer's industrious volumes. This, in the case of a countryman, is perhaps only natural. But it seems also to have been accepted by his English translator; and this, though in the circumstances perhaps not unnatural, is a pity.

admire and profit by what is good in those works without disinterring the man himself, to prove over his poor dry bones that he too was mortal like the rest of us? What does it help us, this laborious palimpsest of Byron's life that has been recently given us? What does it help us, to turn again, as by such disproportionate praise we are inevitably forced to turn, to the old story of those early Weimar days, to the Frau Von Stein and Christiane Vulpius, and to other episodes in that long laborious life, which all who truly read and admire that great character would so willingly pass over? What Goethe himself has left us is surely enough; and if the young generation will walk by the light which this good Scotch Professor has drawn therefrom and trimmed ready for their hands, they can hardly fail to get wisdom at any rate. While for the rest, let us be content to say with Shakespeare—and how the labours of every fresh biographical resurrectionist irresistibly impel us to thank heaven that he at least is safe!—

> "They say best men are moulded out of faults,
> And, for the most, become much more the better
> For being a little bad."

Béro: A Story of Monte Carlo.

Chapter V.

WHY DO YOU PLAY?

Both Warrender and Madame Fano paused involuntarily.

"Is it not Thomas Hardy," she said, "who calls this place, 'a vast cosmopolitan playground, like a conservatory with the sky for its dome'? and another novelist says that it is 'the moral sewer of Europe.' Oh, but one does see and hear sickening sights and sounds! I never believed thoroughly in human degradation till I beheld it here."

"Yet," exclaimed Warrender impulsively, "you remain, and you play. Oh, why——"

He paused, amazed at his own temerity. She moved on without speaking, and for some moments he fancied that he had offended her. At last she said abruptly, and with more energy than she had yet shown:

"You might as well ask me why I live—why I have got the sort of temperament which makes gambling a necessity to me."

"Perhaps," said Warrender, "the riddle is not so hard as it seems."

"No," she replied, "I read it by a light of my own. I saw in some book the other day a comparison between human beings and stones set rolling down a hill by an act of determination over which the stone had certainly no control. We don't come into the world of our own accord; we don't choose which particular vice we shall inherit from our ancestors. I didn't choose to be fond of play. I am the result of a far-reaching chain of causes and effects, and for me to be different, the whole world would have had to be different."

"That is a depressing theory. I don't like it."

"Yes it is depressing. I don't like it either; but I feel its truth."

"Then," he continued, "there are the living forces with which we come daily into contact. Even if humanity were composed of irresponsible items there would be play for design in its grouping. Madame Fano, are you one of those feverish persons, who make doubts out of certainties, and certainties out of doubts? Isn't all life a great why? We know not whence we come or whither we

go: and if we did, the knowledge would not affect our present condition. Of what use is it to question that restless, longing, probing inner *I* which laughs at itself, and pities itself? It strains after pure heights that the body is powerless to reach, and beholds with eyes which we cannot blindfold, the pitiful contrasts and incongruities, the grim horrors, the grotesque mockeries, the bitterness, the sweetness, and the pathos, that make life so tangled a skein? It will never give me a satisfying reply; yet the very realisation that there is this part of me, as real and yet as ethereal as the scent of a flower, which loves, joys, suffers, nay even sins, lifts me above the brute level; and the exquisite happiness it brings me, consoles me also for the pain I endure because of it."

He was looking at her earnestly. The lights from the Casino flashed upon her face. Her lips seemed trembling, and parted in a flickering smile.

"I might remind you of Voltaire's comparison between the immortality of the soul and the song of a nightingale. But I am not one of his disciples. And here we are at the scene of contamination."

As she spoke a carriage drew up at the entrance and deposited its occupants, a fresh, muscular, young English nobleman, his handsome wife, and the clean-featured distinguished-looking masculine attendant who is sometimes considered a necessity by the woman of society.

The lady paused a moment to address Madame Fano. As she ascended the flight of steps, Varuna drew back and lingered in the *place*.

"That trio," she said, "comes here every year. You should go to Lady Arniston, Mr. Warrender, and ask her why she gambles. She has no need of money, and yet I have seen her clutch her winnings as greedily as the veriest hag in the Casino. She professes unbounded devotion to her husband—and also to her friend. She has charming children, everything in the world to make her happy. I have no doubt that she will chatter complacently about the vice at Monte Carlo—the vice which she encourages by her presence and example—and the misery which she would not alleviate if she could. Life would be without zest were there no tragedies. I know a great many women like her. There's your friend, Mrs. Featherstone, who finds it desirable to pick up the Monte Carlo jargon which is talked glibly in some circles. None of them have any sympathy with the unfortunates, who, driven to seek distraction from wretchedness, or urged by a worse necessity, come here year after year—slaves, madwomen—

loathing the chains they have not power to break. Don't you know that there's a craving for excitement as keen as that of the dipsomaniac for alcohol? Don't ask me again why I remain here. And now let us go in, and you shall make your own observations."

They entered, and mingled with the motley throng pacing the vestibule, and breathing the heavy odours of stale scents and cigarette smoke. The rooms were even more thronged than in the afternoon. Lord Bretland approached as they stood watching the players at *trente et quarante*, and spoke to Madame Fano with an air of interest and deferential homage, which surprised Warrender, and was in marked contrast to his usual listless manner.

"I did what you wished and saw your pensioner off by the *rapide* from Nice this morning. She is, now at least, out of temptation's reach. You may congratulate yourself upon having rescued a fellow-creature from something worse than suicide. But Madame Fano," he added, turning to Warrender, "is one of those persons who do good by stealth and call it evil."

"It is you rather who have cause for self-congratulation," replied she. "Without your aid to-day, I should have been powerless. Thank you. How are the tables going?" She spoke abruptly, and as if she would have avoided the subject.

Lord Bretland entered upon a technical account of the proceedings, which was but half intelligible to Warrender. At its conclusion, she handed the latter a little rouleau of gold. "Please put it down for me wherever you choose."

He protested that he was ignorant of the game, and knew not how the chances were running."

"That is of no consequence. Stake at haphazard on either red or black."

"At least let me bank with you, and I shall have the satisfaction of halving your losses."

"No," she replied coldly. "I never bank with any one."

He watched two or three rounds, then laid the stake on black. It was doubled; she motioned to him to let it remain. The same result followed again and again; after the fourth time, he gathered in, and gave her a mass of glittering coin.

"Go on," she said. Her eyes were sparkling, and she smiled at him in a way which set his nerves tingling. He was so excited that his fingers trembled as he swept up the gold. There flashed through his mind the recollection of Lord Bretland's words. Was she then the victim of a vile enchantment, which he perhaps might be destined to break? Nay, were they not both under a

spell? There was something horrible in the clink of the gold, the relentless swaying of the rakes, the impassive tones of the croupiers. Again that dream-like feeling overcame him. All the time he was winning largely. At the first reverse, she stopped him.

"That will do. See, how prudent I am this evening. It is only when I stake myself that I lose, and become desperate, and go on doubling. Now I shall play no more. Presently, I want to talk to you about my sister Helena."

She was observing him closely, and noticed that, as she uttered the name, he seemed to be awakened to new and painful consciousness. His lip quivered, and there was a slight nervous contraction of his heavy upper eyelid.

"I know more about you than you perhaps imagine," she said very softly. "*I* have the sixth sense, and I don't think that my instinct erred when it singled you out this afternoon. And you have been winning. It is only those in sympathy with me, who win for me. You may, if you choose, be my friend."

It was impossible to smile at the superstitious credulity which her words betrayed. There was in her manner a simplicity, an almost childish appeal, which affected him curiously. "I could desire no higher distinction," he exclaimed with earnestness.

She shook her head very sadly.

At this moment General Featherstone interrupted them:

"Madame Fano, I know you are fond of music. Adam's Overture to 'Giralda' is to be performed presently; it is worth hearing. My love," turning to his wife, "will you not come?"

"Oh, my dear Edward," cried Mrs. Featherstone, "how often must I tell you that I have really no time for listening to music at Monte Carlo? One hears plenty of it in London. Give me two hundred francs, darling, and meet us at the restaurant in half-an-hour."

General Featherstone obediently furnished the required sum, and departed alone, Madame Fano having excused herself from accompanying him on the plea that the heat had given her a headache.

"Isn't it a mercy that my husband considers himself a musical genius!" murmured Mrs. Featherstone. "He would be bored to death if he could not go to the concerts and crib other people's ideas for his own compositions. Now, Lord Bretland, there are quantities of people here who have histories written on their faces. I am told that Cora Pearl is in the room. She has just come back from New Caledonia. Point her out to me. And who is that golden-haired, striking-looking woman in black lace, with the diamond star fastening her bonnet? I am sure

that I have seen her photograph in the shop windows. She is the sort of person who makes one think of Mary Stuart, Cleopatra, and all the rest of them, don't you know? A dethroned queen, for whose sake men would still dare and die! There is something about her, which, if I were a man, would completely turn my head. It is not only her beauty, but a sort of recklessness, melancholy, mystery—I don't know what. Tell me her name."

"That, Mrs. Featherstone—" Lord Bretland put up his eyeglass and critically examined the lady indicated—"that is the famous Caterina, Princess Balzani, the most intriguing woman in Europe; still one of the most beautiful; certainly one of the most fascinating; and perhaps, without exception, the most wretched. Of course you have seen her photograph. Three years ago her name was in every paper. Her house was the rendezvous of the Nihilists. She was arrested; and scandal whispers that she only escaped exile to Siberia through Prince ——'s influence. She arrived here two days ago. The Grand Duke is in attendance. It is said that the best part of her life is spent in a morphine stupor. She lives only when the sun begins to wane. Unfortunate lady! Morphia and Monte Carlo, conspiracy and dynamite! This is what these beautiful creatures come to. Ah, Mrs. Featherstone, let me give you one word of advice. Don't cultivate the more subtle forms of emotion. They are blighting in their effects."

Mrs. Featherstone was eagerly raking in her winnings, and did not appear to have heard the conclusion of this softly uttered tirade. Varuna, who had been conversing with a heavy moustachioed Russian—a man easily recognised among the motley crowd at Monte Carlo, turned wearily to Warrender.

"Will you take me somewhere for a breath of cooler air?"

Chapter VI.

IN THE GARDENS OF THE CASINO.

They walked on to the terrace. The soft wind from the sea blew caressingly upon Varuna's face, as she leaned upon the balustrade.

"Tell me now about Helena."

Warrender hesitated, overpowered by repugnance to associate the sacred remembrance of this girl, who seemed to him now far away as one of Heaven's angels, with the varied impressions and pungent, bewildering sensations which his brief intercourse with

her sister had wrought in his being. Varuna appeared to divine his mood.

"I understand: you are unwilling to describe Helena by commonplaces; and to do so in any other terms would seem—inappropriate. It is so difficult for a man to speak of a woman who interests him deeply to a relative of hers, with whom he is hardly acquainted."

"I do feel this difficulty," answered Warrender, constrained to frankness by her searching gaze.

"And especially," continued Varuna, "when the questioner and her surroundings are out of harmony with the subject of the conversation. But, since you know my sister intimately, you must be aware that she has an enthusiastic attachment to her mother and to me."

"One would find it impossible not to admire Miss Kilsyth's character," said Warrender, speaking with effort: "it is full of the purest womanly sentiment."

"Yet," said Varuna, "from what I remember of Sir John Kilsyth, there could have been but little in him to draw this forth. I may be prejudiced. He disliked us intensely—my mother and me—though, to do him justice, I believe that he never tried to set Helena against us, but simply ignored our existence. A narrow-minded, fleshly, fox-hunting squire, to whom the finer world of thought and imagination was a closed book. Was it not so?"

"Yes, replied Warrender thoughtfully. "Their natures were quite unsympathetic, and Miss Kilsyth's confessor helped to keep them apart. Your sister's life has been barren of affection. It is not surprising that she should have lavished her warmest feelings upon her religion and upon a mother and sister whom she could only love from a distance."

"There is something bitter in your tone," said Varuna thoughtfully. "Her religion! yes, my sister is *exaltée dévote;* she has lived among English Protestants, and has always considered herself cruelly ill-used in having been separated from my mother, whom as a fervent Catholic she regards also as a martyr. You are thinking that her enthusiasm has been wasted in a dream and that soon she will be cruelly awakened from her illusions. But my mother has a singular power of winning and retaining affection, and Helena may not be disappointed. Of course you know that she is coming to live with us here."

"To live with you! At Monte Carlo!" exclaimed Warrender.

"At Monte Carlo, in our villa yonder. She will lead our life, unless indeed she be so independent of will, and clear of intellect, as to choose her own path. She will breathe the atmosphere of

the Casino which you find already so corrupt; she will be introduced to our friends—if we have any friends. She will be taught to play *roulette*. It is possible that in her nature too may lie the seeds of that fatal passion which has descended from parent to child. Mr. Warrender, we seem always to get back to the same point. There is no use in trying to contend against inherited propensity."

"Oh no, no!" he said impulsively, and with real sorrow in his voice. "Don't speak in this way. Madame Fano, you have got some morbid idea in your mind which I don't follow. I wish that I could. I wish that I could uproot it."

"That would be impossible. I will try to make you understand me. You see my mother, you see me. You don't know the circumstances of our lives, and these I cannot tell you; but I can take you further back. My great-grandfather was a Frenchman. He first played away his patrimony, then staked his honour, and at last—having nothing left—an hour before he was taken to the guillotine, bartered in a jest his chance of heaven. My grandfather, a child then, was smuggled away to South America. He married there, and came back. The seeds were in him. It is not many years since he might have been seen in the lowest Paris *cafés* working out imaginary systems with straws and peas, and wearing the word 'revenge' written on his cap. . . . Well, what can one expect? Nature cannot be defied. Mr. Warrender, I would have spared my sister Helena this ordeal, had it been in my power. I did make an effort—I offered to winter in Rome in order that she might be saved from the contaminating influences of this place. But it was of no use—events—everything—worked against the plan. When a thing is fated, it must be. To struggle is only waste of energy."

"I think you exaggerate the danger—Miss Kilsyth's temperament is more self-contained than you imagine."

"Possibly."

"But why of no use?" asked Warrender eagerly, reverting to her former words.

"This year, which begins to-morrow, will be the most critical in my life. It would be defying destiny were I to attempt to pass it anywhere but in Monaco. Happiness, peace, nay existence itself, for me depend upon the chances of the gaming-table. You smile at me. But all the ridicule in the world wouldn't alter the conviction which has grown in me with the years. There are times when one seems to have within one the power of a prophet or a seer. Often when I am standing at the *roulette* table, the feeling comes over me—a sort of darkness and terror, and then bright vision. It is as though I had lived it all before, and it were

coming again surely and swiftly." She paused and drew in her breath with a little gasp: then laughed softly, "How curious it is my telling you all this—but often a stranger makes the best confessor."

"At least," he said, "you may trust me!"

She laughed again. "Oh! such confidences are not sacred. If you repeated them, the worst people could say of me would be that I am a little mad; and probably they say that already. Do you see my hand? The moon is so bright that you might almost read its lines. A long time ago in Venice my fate was partially foretold. You know that the Venetians are adepts in palmistry. Several of my sibyl's predictions have been already fulfilled; why not the rest? But my ground for belief is firmer than that. Character makes fate; the sixth sense gives insight into character. Mine is the true gambler's hand; my life the stake with which I play. After this year I will never enter a gaming room again."

"Madame Fano, you perplex me strangely," said Warrender, almost forgetting Helena in the interest which her impulsive words excited.

"How?"

He paused before replying. "Your nature is so noble. Though my knowledge of you can hardly be measured by hours, I have seen enough, in trivial incidents—words, gestures—to assure me that you were created for high purposes. And surely it is beneath you to be influenced seriously by the prophecies of a so-called soothsayer!"

"Ah, so far our minds may march together, but there we diverge and become inhabitants of different spheres. Let us leave the subject. Do you remain long at Monte Carlo?"

"A few weeks perhaps. Possibly only a few days. Amusement is a very indefinite object, and it is my only one at present."

"I had fancied from my sister Helena's letters, in which she has mentioned you occasionally, that your objects in life were very definite."

"I had one a short time ago upon which my career turned. I wished to marry your sister. Madame Fano, you compel candour."

"I am glad of that—in this case at least. If even mere acquaintances could stand sometimes towards each other, 'soul to soul, as hand to hand,' the world might be a better and happier place. Now will you admit that sympathy is beyond what can be seen and touched and reasoned upon? I sympathise with you, Mr. Warrender, though I have no right to do so."

"Why no right?" he asked.

"I have never loved."

She uttered the words, with her eyes turned seaward, sadly, calmly as though she were merely stating a not supremely interesting fact in her history.

"And my sister Helena did not love you?" she added slowly.

"No. At all events she refused to become my wife."

"Perhaps at her confessor's command. You are a Protestant, she is a Catholic, and she is wealthy.

"That has been my deep regret. Had we stood upon the same level her heart might have had freer play. For I was conceited enough to fancy that she cared for me, and that if there were any conflict in her mind, love would prove victorious. I was entirely mistaken. Her rejection was so cold and passionless that I might have been suing at the feet of one of the saints in her oratory."

"And you accepted the refusal, without argument or entreaty?"

"A man does not *entreat* for love. It is the irresistible impulse towards each other of two souls—a union in which there is neither conscious giving nor receiving."

"I thought that only poets analysed love. And you are not a poet; you are a man of science. So then, it is true that love transforms every man into a poet—while the fever lasts. Love is a fever, is it not—and most dangerous when caught after first youth?"

She plucked a geranium and scattered its petals to the breeze. He watched her, his mind rocked upon uncertainty, in a vague manner feeling himself at the mercy of some strange wind or current which might bear him into unknown seas. She looked up suddenly: their eyes met.

"A fever," he repeated absently. "Yes, perhaps."

"I have always observed," said Varuna, with her enigmatic smile, "that men in love take the greatest pains to impress upon one that love is a kind of spiritual essence of the most refined quality, unknowable except from experience, yet the most positive, perfect and glorious thing in or out of the world, while all the time their manner unconsciously conveys that it is, after all, a most perishable article, of the earth earthy, and singularly quick to evaporate."

"You offered me your sympathy a few moments ago," said Warrender, piqued. "Now you withdraw it, and make me a butt for cynicism."

"I did not mean to be cynical. But that sort of feeling permeates one's nature, showing itself in every word and look. But I am not so worn out as you would seem to imagine. I have a few illusions, a few faiths left. One is a faint religious sentiment,—I

am a Catholic, you know, though I don't often enter the confessional, and am not, like my mother, in the habit of offering up candles to call down a blessing upon my play. This ought to set me against a marriage between you and my sister; but, on the other hand, though I scoff, I have a lurking belief in love: and then, has not instinct pointed you out to me as a friend? A great French musician once assured me that there were but three things in the world worth living for—'*l'amour, l'amitié, et le travail.*' Love I know not. Friendship I understand as a grateful possibility. And work—ah! that talisman to guard one against one's direst tendencies can never be possessed by me. But trust in my will if not in my right to be of service to you." She spoke in a different tone, and her voice softened inexpressibly.

"The strongest right——" he began.

"You don't quite understand me. I did not mean in the conventional sense. In that I have none. But instinct establishes a kind of claim. Sympathy, however, presupposes community of experience. To feel another's sorrow, one must have suffered in like manner."

"Then you, madame—have you been so fortunate as not to know suffering?"

"Oh, I have been wretched, most miserable at times. But, as I said, I have never loved. If, and I suspect so, Helena loves you, and has been coerced in the matter by her priests, you shall know the truth; and I will help you to be happy as far as lies in my power."

She moved on; while he, bewildered by the rapid variations in her manner, was almost glad to be spared the necessity for replying.

They found Mrs. Featherstone, her husband, Lord Bretland and some others, who were to join the New Year's Eve party, sipping iced drinks outside the restaurant and professing readiness to return to the hotel.

Chapter VII.

ENTER COLONEL CAZALETTE.

The clock had struck half-past eleven when they entered Mrs. Featherstone's *salon*. The room was decorated with flowers, the table laid, and Mrs. Kilsyth and Mr. Braunstein, assisted by a waiter, were engaged in the concoction of punch. The elder lady asked eagerly for news of the evening's proceedings.

"A run on red," she cried, "and I was not there! Alas! alas!

my doll is stuffed with sawdust. I'll get me to a nunnery—oh these difficulties of life are hard to support! Well," she added, making a little grimace at her daughter, "this naughty child who was obliged to stay at home has won a great deal of love and no money. I hope that the stern mamma has been more fortunate."

Madame Fano, whose play of features was becoming to Warrender a source of the deepest interest, smiled much as an indulgent parent might smile upon an unreasonable daughter, whose vagaries might be met with amused toleration but were at the same time a source of sorrow and perplexity. She placed before her mother a little case containing a *rouleau* of gold.

"There is my New Year's present. You see that I wish to make amends for my harshness, though I ought to say that it is Mr. Warrender who deserves your thanks, for I owe my luck to him."

Mrs. Kilsyth fingered the coins with the enjoyment of a child to whom a new plaything has been presented. "Now, for a few hours at least," she exclaimed, "I am independent of my bankers. Money, as Bulwer says—General Featherstone, I am quite aware that accuracy in quotation is not my strong point; but, like your wife, I have a mind above small details—'Money is power, love also; for even gratitude can be bought by money.' That was a man who understood life and its requirements. And now let us stir the punch."

Several other guests had dropped in, and the room resounded with conversation and laughter.

"De ponch is ready!" cried the German gentleman, who had been assiduously flourishing the ladle. "It wants but one thing, and dat is, drinking."

Madame Fano had moved apart and stood by the open window, her thoughtful eyes gazing into the moonlit garden.

The minute-hand pointed towards midnight. "I see him; he is coming!" cried Mr. Braunstein. "He is a beautiful leetle New Year! He is small and thin and lofely. Leetle New Year, I drink your health! and I ask you to give us all the best of good things—health, wealth and happiness!"

A faint chime sounded in the distance, and echoed through the *salon*. There was a momentary pause. Then glass clinked prettily against glass. Every face round the table smiled, yet underlying the surface brightness there was upon each a shade of pensiveness. Mrs. Featherstone turned from Lord Bretland to whisper softly in her husband's ear, with a sweetness which seemed to declare that an effete civilization had not robbed her heart of

its bloom. General Featherstone, standing erect at the head of the table, with an air of old-fashioned solemnity, and in a few appropriate words, gave forth the toast—"To the New Year, and may he bring to all who welcome him here, health, happiness and prosperity."

No one observed while the toast was being drunk, and the youngest born of Time ushered into his kingdom, that Warrender and Madame Fano, half shrouded by the window drapery, stood together lending no voice to the invocation.

There was silence between them. It was she who first broke it. "We are outcasts. The New Year has passed by us, and we have made no effort to gain his favour. Mr. Warrender, I won't offer you the conventional greetings. I won't venture to prophesy that you will win the woman you love. My blessing might be ill-omened and carry only bitterness and misfortune."

"The assurance of your goodwill, Madame Fano, is worth more than prophecies. You said a little while ago that I had brought you luck to-day. At least, you will not think my words meaningless if I say from my heart that I hope this critical year may bring you happiness."

"Happiness," she repeated. "Not riches, not prosperity, but the one impossible thing in all the world—for me. It is a question of temperament, Mr. Warrender, and mine is one of unrest."

She moved towards the laughing circle. The light of the chandelier fell upon her as she stood sheathed in her crimson mantle, with the grave, troubled look ageing and hardening her face.

"Varuna," cried Mrs. Kilsyth, "neither you nor Mr. Warrender have drunk to the New Year. How can you expect to be fortunate in your future undertakings? Come, the punch is excellent. Mr. Braunstein and I deserve to be congratulated upon our skill."

Madame Fano folded her arms and shook her head. "Too late, mother. Mrs. Featherstone, I am not an amiable guest, but you will forgive me if I leave you; my head still aches from the heat in the Casino."

There was a universal remonstrance. "Not yet, Madame Fano," said General Featherstone, striking some familiar chords upon the piano. "My wife has a few sentimental regrets on the score of her native land. Let us drink to the health of absent friends, and you will lead us in the solo of 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

"But I should not do so with any fervour. Sentiment is a quality which I don't possess. I have no native land, no pleasing associations with the past, no absent friends to regret."

As the words passed her lips, Warrender observed that she

lifted her eyes suddenly and started, growing visibly paler. An exclamation half rose, and was checked. Following her look he perceived the figure of a stranger in the doorway, a tall man of foreign aspect, with delicate aquiline nose, clear sallow face, close-cropped vandyke beard, and full, slightly prominent grey eyes, which surveyed the group with a smiling, benignant expression.

"Colonel Cazalette!" ejaculated Mrs. Kilsyth, in a tone low, but sufficiently audible to startle Warrender. She moved abruptly from the table, and, almost as if she wished for the moment to avoid recognition, took up her position slightly behind the Englishman. He noticed that she appeared discomposed, and placed a chair for her in the embrasure of the window. Her hands trembled. She appeared conscious that she was betraying an unwarrantable excitement.

"I have a weak heart," she murmured; "any sudden arrival always upsets me. I thought he was at Paris," she added, almost fiercely. "Lord Bretland said that he was not to be here for a week yet. But I am very glad"—with a furtive glance at Warrender—"very glad indeed. Do you know Colonel Cazalette? He is a delightful person! an old friend, and so zealous—the most perfect combination of the world and the Church—not that he is in the Church—oh no, of course not; but so devout—and such an admirable photographer." She repeated the last sentence with an intensity of emphasis which strengthened Warrender's doubts as to her sanity—"such an admirable photographer!"

Meanwhile the new-comer had advanced, bowing with the sweetest courtesy and self-possession. "Ah, Madame Fano, I am grieved to hear that cruel statement uttered by you. But I am here to prove myself a present, and not an absent friend. Mrs. Featherstone, accept my apologies for this intrusion. I arrived only an hour ago, and have ventured to claim the privileges of our last year's acquaintanceship in Paris, and offer you my congratulations and best wishes for the new year."

"I must say," exclaimed Mrs. Featherstone, "delighted as I am to see you, Colonel Cazalette, that your words are more soothing to the nerves than your actions. There is something very uncanny and Mephistopheles-like in this sudden midnight apparition. Are we all acting in a melodrama, and have we been going through an appropriate New Year's Eve prologue? First of all, Mr. Warrender drops down from the clouds. Secondly, Madame Fano, with his assistance, makes an extraordinary *coup*. Thirdly, at the close of the first act, enter Colonel Cazalette, the hero of the piece. Here we are—the principal personages occupy the stage, a becomingly diversified chorus ranges itself in the rear. Lord Bretland,

you and I are the nonentities, whose part in the drama is to fill in gaps and furnish cues. Festive scene: a faint suggestion of tragedy in the background. Strike up, Edward. The chorus advances."

She placed herself in a theatrical attitude. Lord Bretland followed suit. Mr. Braunstein ladled out several glasses of punch, and with comic gravity presented one to each of the chorus. Madame Fano's stately greeting to Colonel Cazalette was drowned by the ringing notes of the drinking-song in 'Traviata,' which, led by Mrs. Featherstone, pealed through the *salon*.

But the night had changed. A wind had risen, with apparent suddenness, and sweeping chill through the open window, extinguished one of the candles upon the supper-table. The slight occurrence seemed to heated imaginations ominous. Mrs. Kilsyth shuddered, and Mr. Braunstein stepped back and closed the window. The operatic music swelled louder. An element of forced and artificial mirth replaced the former sweet, subdued gaiety. Shadows, moonlight, vague sentiment, tender memories of the dying year—all had vanished. The spirit of the scene had assumed another shape, and it was curious to reflect that Colonel Cazalette, with his saint-like profile and courtly bearing, was the magician to whose entrance the transformation was due. Varuna also appeared to have caught the infection of the hour. Her welcome to Cazalette had struck Warrender as cold and constrained. Her air had been haughty and listless. Now she took up her part in the scene, and sang and acted the duet with Cazalette after a fashion which would not have disgraced a professional singer. Presently she turned towards her mother, who still held herself in the background, and with charming cordiality indicated Cazalette's presence.

Mrs. Kilsyth rose, held out her hand, and made two or three wandering remarks with a forced sprightliness which was but a poor imitation of her former vivacity. Her manner might have passed currency with any less interested observers than Varuna and Warrender. As it was, there seemed in the minds of each a startled sense of something amiss. Cazalette with perfect tact, and with an air of tender protectiveness that was intended to react upon Varuna, drew Mrs. Kilsyth slightly aside and discoursed upon agreeable nothings till she had apparently quite recovered her composure. The rest of the party had gathered round the piano. Again Warrender and Madame Fano stood apart.

"My mother is not quite herself to-night," remarked the latter in a disturbed tone. "We have not seen Colonel Cazalette for

some years; and he is connected with an event which shook my mother's nerves sadly. I mean the death of my husband."

As she spoke the last sentence without a sigh or falter, Varuna directed her mournful gaze full upon Warrender as though she wished him to learn from it the secret of her lonely, troubled life.

Chapter VIII.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS.

Warrender slept badly that night. The partitions in the Riviera hotels are thin, and he fancied that there came from the room next that which he occupied, a sound as of suppressed weeping. The thought disturbed him, and, after his first troubled doze, banished slumber. When silence fell, he was still restless, and full of strange excitement. It seemed to him that since three o'clock that afternoon, he had experienced sensations which might give piquancy to a lifetime. He was not prone to self-analysis. His tendencies lay towards action rather than introspection; but to-night his very nature seemed unhinged, and wonder at the rapid transformation from listless despondency to vivid interest, which had taken place in his being, forced him into a groove of thought foreign to his character. Why the change? He knew that Helena, the pivot upon which a few weeks since existence had appeared to turn, was not now more near to him than when—pale, still and without visible sign of emotion—she had bidden him leave her and hope no more. Yet it was natural that his mind should seize upon Madame Fano's insinuation of priestly coercion. Was there a possibility that she did indeed love him, and that her rejection had had its root in fanaticism? He could at one time almost have sworn that he was dear to her. In the old days, before his Mexican expedition, she had been wont to blush and tremble before his glance. Often, her eyes, shyly seeking his, had upon encounter been swiftly averted, with a consciousness which had seemed to tell its own tale. He had approached her confidently, only to be repulsed by coldness, and, with pride wounded, to retire cursing his own presumption.

And she was coming to Monte Carlo. In a short time, if he remained, he must be again thrown closely into her society. Would it not be the truest wisdom to accept his fate, and to make a supreme effort to stifle vain regrets in fresh and absorbing occupation? The horizon of life was not bounded by love, nor was he a puling boy to be crushed by a first disappointment. Granted that Helena Kilsyth was the one woman in the world

whom he could ever call wife, the pursuit of science and exploration still possessed charms, and at least friendship remained to him for consolation.

The thought of friendship evoked Madame Fano's image, if indeed, during the long night watch, it could be said to have ever faded into indistinctness. There was in her attitude towards him something of appeal which touched all that was most chivalrous in his nature. Apart from her irresistible fascination, she had the claim of being Helena's sister; the claim of a woman helpless and dumbly seeking to be rescued from herself; that of a victim to an inherited morbid tendency for which she could hardly be held responsible. His imagination dwelt upon Varuna's superstitious belief that the new-born year would for weal or woe decide her destiny, and upon Mrs. Featherstone's laughing suggestion of a play in which each of them was to act a more or less important part. Cazalette, too, stirred his curiosity. Setting aside his presumable connection with the fate of Mrs. Kilsyth and her daughter, there was something in the very appearance of the man—in his mediæval face; in his sweet suavity—tinged also by mystery and reserve; in the subtle sense of intellect and influence with which he impressed the most casual observer—that made him seem a determining power in the faintly outlined drama which now thrilled Warrender's fancy.

No, he would not go—not yet. He would remain at least till Helena's arrival.

Thus the dark hours passed on slowly. Daylight found him wide awake and weary. He threw the venetians open. The sun was rising upon the first day of the new year. Mists were rolling away, and distant peaks flushing a tender rose. Every breath smelt sweetly. A myriad dew drops sparkled on each tree and shrub. The hills seemed to have barely awakened from sleep—their crests clear, but the shadows as of dreamland still lingering upon the olive groves. Monaco lay shrouded in a transparent veil of vapour. A breeze ruffled the Mediterranean, and to the west every wavelet was tipped with gold.

Warrender rose and dressed. Only drowsy servants, and men going forth on early errands, with holiday garments not yet donned, passed him as he made his way along the corridor and through the hotel garden. He wandered into the grounds of the Casino and stood again upon the terrace where Madame Fano had made her strange confession the night before—"*I have never loved.*" He seemed to hear the words as she had uttered them, calm, distinct, and mournful. Spoken by another woman they might have borne no deep significance. From her lips, they revealed a mental

desert of dreary hopelessness which made him shudder. It was pitiful to reflect that her pulses had never throbbed to any sweeter or diviner agitation than the feverish excitement of gambling, that her holiest instincts and purest aspirations should be smothered by this growth of baleful thought which could surely only flourish in the corrupt atmosphere she now breathed.

There was in Warrender's nature a certain old-world simplicity and impulse towards knightliness somewhat out of harmony with the age in which he lived. For him, womanhood had a peculiar sanctity; and love, truth and purity were definite realities, rare and often obscured by modern shams, but still existing. It was his theory that modern civilization had tended to debase rather than to elevate the weaker sex. All his chivalry rose in defence or justification of the falsity and frivolity with which women are usually charged. Men and society were in fault, not they, who under ideal conditions should be neither more or less than wives, mothers and saints. To reform the world he would have begun by reforming women. At present, the object of his yearning solicitude, Madame Fano, seemed the one woman to be—not reformed—but restored to her better self.

The gardens were deserted save for a *bonne*, a group of black-eyed, fantastically-dressed children—French babies; good heavens! how out of place would the clear-browed, frank-faced English boy or girl appear amid these surroundings!—and a sallow, haggard-eyed gambler of the night before, who sat upon one of the benches in an attitude of dejection, and gave the impression that he was ruminating upon the most convenient mode of committing suicide.

The sun was now considerably above the horizon. The mountains had lost the ethereal hues of early morning, and the sea was a sheet of silver. Warrender strolled round by the terraces, his senses drinking in the beauty and fragrance on all sides of him, and presently began to skirt the sea, walking along the Condamine road and finally ascending the steep hill which leads to the fortress of Monaco.

He lingered in the quiet streets of the old town, delighting in the contrast they presented to the glittering quarter he had quitted. Now he paused at the point of the promontory and took a view of the narrow thoroughfare he had traversed. His mind was still unconsciously occupied by Madame Fano, and it was with hardly a start of surprise that he beheld the lady herself advancing from the opposite direction.

She did not see him. Her eyes were cast down, her thoughts evidently preoccupied; she walked with a slow, undulating gait,

which in the crowded Casino he had had no opportunity of studying. In her hands she carried a basket and a bouquet of flowers. When within a few yards of him, she stopped at the closed door of a baker's shop, where the brown twisted loaves hung on nails on the wall, knocked, and after a moment entered.

He waited in the hope of seeing her emerge, but several minutes elapsed and there was no sign of her reappearance. He turned, half angry with himself for his curiosity. "Why should I play the detective in this fashion?" he murmured, and walked resolutely away, past a little thicket of umbrella pines, whence zig-zag paths led downward from terrace to terrace, each planted with flowering shrubs and beautiful with the luxuriance of semi-tropical vegetation. Here natural situation enhanced all that labour could accomplish: palms waved their feathery plumes, and the bright crimson of geraniums, the blue-green of aloes, and pink of mesembryanthemums stood out vividly against an intensely blue sky and sea. Two or three gnarled olive-trees and stone-pines, and an occasional glimpse of rough rockwork overgrown with weeds, gave wildness to the scene and added to the sense of solitude. Far away were the promontory of Antibes and the distant range of the Esterels, and on the sea, white sails like gulls were already scudding.

Warrender seated himself upon a semicircular bench turned from the road, and, with a curious feeling of distance and transference of interest, bent his thoughts towards an expedition he was then planning to the Fiji Islands, and to the wonders of the South Seas.

He had not been meditating long when the faint rustle of a dress upon the gravel near, brought him back to Monte Carlo. Madame Fano was standing close beside him. She looked surprised, but did not hold out her hand as he rose and approached her.

"So you have found out these gardens already," she said with a smile. "They are a favourite resort of mine, and far more beautiful than anything at the Casino. I know every turn, almost every plant. But you have not chosen your seat well. If you like, I will show you my especial nook. It is on a lower terrace and quite screened from the road.

She led the way down a rudely cut flight of steps on to a narrow level, descending by a steep wall straight to the sea, its only parapet a hedge of mingled aloes and geraniums. At one end a kind of grotto had been scooped in the rock; a tiny stream trickled through it and watered banks of moss and fern. Here was a bench upon which Madame Fano seated herself. The cliff

against which Warrender leaned formed a sheltering background. At its base were beds of violets in full bloom scenting the air.

"One might imagine oneself a long way from Monte Carlo," said Warrender. "But I did not expect that you would have risen so early, Madame Fano, after your fatigue of last night."

"Oh, after a wakeful night, nothing refreshes one so much as a stroll before the dew has dried up. We must have left the hotel almost together, Mr. Warrender. But I came by the higher road and I went into the church by the ravine, to offer up a new year's prayer for my little girl."

"I saw you a few minutes ago, in the street yonder."

"At the hunchback baker's, who is quite an interesting person in his way. I must introduce you to him at some future time. I have a weakness for the bread of the country, and very often carry home one of the brown sour twists; and there is a little lame boy there, whom it would not do to forget on New Year's Day."

"Madame Fano, I begin to see that Lord Bretland was quite right in what he said of you yesterday evening. You make a jest of benevolence, yet you practise it largely."

She flushed slightly. "No, I do not jest at benevolence—it is too rare. My visit to the lame boy does not deserve the name. I am very fond of children. This is a pleasant spot," she added as though wishing to change the subject. "One can be as lonely as one pleases here. So few of the crowd from Monte Carlo visit these gardens. I often come to this seat with my book, or with no companions but my thoughts, and spend hours trying to reconcile facts and fancies."

"Successfully?"

"Need you ask? Life is a strange problem, Mr. Warrender. That remark is not original, is it? It has been made once or twice before; but the truth of it remains just as forcible. One sees such a mass of incongruous elements which cannot be made to blend or harmonise. Talk of free will! There's no such thing. One fancies sometimes that it would be so easy to wrench oneself away from what is hurtful or degrading or even simply disagreeable, and lead just the kind of life which would develope one's few good qualities; but that is exactly what is impossible."

"Oh no, Madame Fano," said Warrender earnestly. "It can never be impossible to separate oneself from what is hurtful."

"Yes, it is quite impossible. I know of what you are thinking. As I lay awake last night I wondered what had made me talk to you so unreservedly. I don't remember ever having spoken in the same way to any one before."

"Perhaps," said Warrender impetuously, "you had a fancy that

I might help you. I beg your pardon," he added. "That was a presumptuous sort of thing to say."

There was no rebuke in her look; rather, a faint gleam of satisfaction.

"I am glad that you said it. If there were any presumptuousness it would lie in my having had such a fancy. Yet it was just what I did feel. I am very candid, but there is an answering candour about you, Mr. Warrender, which makes me think that it would be quite possible to apply to you if I were in need."

"I wish that you would act upon that feeling; and you would see——" He paused.

"See what?"

"I don't suppose that I could really help you, but at least my best faculties would be strained in the attempt."

She was silent for a moment, then she said deliberately: "But I am not in need—not, that is, in any definite sense."

"There is an indefinite kind of want which is harder to bear than material trouble—the need of sympathy and fellowship; of faith in oneself and in the goodness of others; of an object upon which to concentrate one's thoughts and interests."

"You think that I have all these wants—that I am unhappy?"

"I have no right to judge, but your words and looks make me fancy so."

She stopped and gathered a little bunch of violets, with which she played.

"But I have an object in life—several. In the first place, I am of use to my mother. Nothing would induce her to leave Monte Carlo; and I am at least able to restrain her from some extravagances. Then, to a certain extent I have inherited her temperament. I am more self-controlled, more calculating, less warm-hearted, but in essentials we are alike. I have a passion for play. It's the same sort of fascination as that which danger has for some natures. You could not understand the fever of excitement which took possession of me last night when you were winning. I don't know what made me stop you. But a feeling came over me all in a moment—of shame, hatred and horror—horror of the future."

She had been looking away from him, and now, with a startled glance that seemed to behold a phantom in his solicitude, met his eyes," which were fastened upon her face in sad inquiry. She laughed nervously.

"My talk is very melodramatic—quite in keeping with the moral atmosphere of Monte Carlo."

"Oh pray go on—if you will trust me. Any trouble or dread of that kind is best spoken of."

"It is not an unreasonable dread, as you would admit if you knew thoroughly the history of my family, and understood me as well as I understand myself. I try to keep the spectre at bay, but it looks out at me from my own face and from the faces of my friends. I see myself as I may be years hence—one of those horrible hags whom you may have noticed at the tables—a more pitiable object than they—with the curse of insanity upon me."

She rose abruptly and moved to the edge of the terrace, where she stood with pale cheeks, lips compressed, and brooding eyes fixed seaward. He followed her, his face, too, white from repressed excitement.

"You must not say that!" he exclaimed agitatedly. "It is not true. You must not; it hurts me to hear you."

She turned towards him, and the eyes of each seemed to be searching into the soul of the other.

"I see that you are in earnest!" she said. "You must love Helena very dearly to feel so deep an interest in her half-sister—a woman whom you have only known for a few hours."

Her words thrilled Warrender painfully. He would have found it impossible to analyse the sensation, but was quite aware that it was a disagreeable one. An eager disclaimer rose involuntarily to his lips, and was checked by embarrassing consciousness. Madame Fano seemed to guess at the cause of his confusion, and said with a smile:

"The obvious answer to that remark is that I am a person who must under any circumstances inspire interest. But do not, I beseech you, talk to me in the conventional language of gallantry. There are so many men ready to swear away their lives at my feet—absolutely not one whom I can call friend. My sister's lover might fill a place which my own lover could never fill. Your frankness last night about your feeling for Helena puts our relations towards each other upon such a safe footing; and notwithstanding all you may have heard about me here, it is quite true that I find great comfort in that certainty."

This speech, in which there was without doubt no underlying emotion, grated curiously upon Warrender. He answered hastily: "You spoke just now of the objects which you had in life. It was absurd in me to fancy for a moment that I could help you. I am weak too—if you are weak—and tossed by every wave of feeling. My position is more lonely than yours, and I stand at a disadvantage. Your knowledge of the world is greater than mine. You have—acquaintances shall we say—who at least wish to devote themselves to you. You have your mother—and your child."

"Is my knowledge of the world greater than yours? Yes, perhaps, of the evil of it. That kind of knowledge only saddens and embitters. Don't let us compare our lives, Mr. Warrender. It is quite enough that they are both unsatisfactory: mine from within; yours from without. But you will not be unhappy for long. Even if you never get what you long for, you have a stronghold against badness and sorrow within yourself. The past and future are not horrors at which you dare not glance."

Her voice broke slightly. He saw her eyes grow larger and softer with unshed tears. His heart rose in struggling entreaty and protest. At that moment a step sounded upon the rocky stair. Both looked round. The shadow thrown upon the cliff revealed the intruder before he himself became visible. It was Cazalette.

Madame Fano moved a few steps uncertainly, as if in doubt whether to advance or retreat. The softness died from her face. She flung away the bunch of violets which she had been holding, as though in the action she would have thrown off the mood which had prompted her self-betraying words. Once more she became the stately woman of the world, cold, weary, inscrutable.

Cazalette stepped forward, his suave, impassive countenance giving no indication of surprise or consciousness that he had disturbed an interesting *tête-à-tête*.

He bowed over the hand Madame Fano offered him; and in a few well-chosen words made something more than the conventional speech of congratulation. Varuna coldly uttered her thanks and returned the greeting.

"It is five years to-day, madame," continued Cazalette, "since I had the honour of wishing you happiness, prosperity, and—farewell, upon this very spot. I did not expect the good fortune of seeing you here this morning."

"For that you must thank Mr. Warrender," replied Varuna—"if it be a question of thanks. I was going home, when I saw him, as I passed, seated upon the most uncomfortable bench in the gardens. He looked as though he wanted to enjoy his thoughts in solitude; it was an act of charity to show him where he might do so happily. Now having earned his gratitude, I will ask you, Colonel Cazalette, to call me a carriage, for I don't feel equal to the long walk in the heat."

"Willingly," said Cazalette. "Mr. Warrender, shall I disturb your meditations if, after a short stroll round the castle, I come back and smoke a cigarette in your company? In my Mexican wanderings I met one or two men who knew you well; and I was

much interested in what I heard of your discoveries. It won't bore you, will it, to have a little chat presently?"

Warrender felt an unreasonable desire to excuse himself, but good breeding and a sense of guilt forbade the inclination; and he assured Colonel Cazalette of the pleasure which he should derive from his company.

"You are wise to drive home," said Cazalette turning to Madame Fano. "I have already seen Mrs. Kilsyth, who begged me, if I met you, to give you a reminder that there is to be an excursion this afternoon; in which," he added, "I have been honoured by an invitation to accompany you."

"Ah!" said Varuna; "that recalls to my mind a note for you, Mr. Warrender, which I have in my pocket, and which was to have been given to the concierge this morning. It is only to ask if you will join us in our expedition. We are going to make a gipsy tea at Cap Martin. The Casino is closed to-day, and we are people without an occupation."

Warrender accepted the invitation with an eagerness which he regretted when he perceived the curious expression which flitted across Cazalette's face.

"Good-bye then for the present," said Varuna. "You will join us in our *salon* at three o'clock?"

Chapter IX.

QUART POT TEA.

Madame Fano was alone in her *salon* when Warrender was announced. The room was charming, and had an air of occupation and long residence not common to the ordinary hotel sitting-room. He made some remark to this effect.

"Yes, we brought a few things with us, and have contrived to give it a homelike look," she answered. "The drains at our villa are being overhauled, but I hope that we shall be settled there again before my sister arrives."

"When do you expect Miss Kilsyth?" asked Warrender.

"It is not quite certain. I think in ten days or a fortnight. Thus, Mr. Warrender," she added with an effort at playfulness, "if Cannes or Nice have any attractions for you, I advise you to visit them at once and return here later."

"No," he replied. "In that case, I should remain here for the next fortnight and then go to Cannes or Nice."

"I think you are wrong," she said gently. "But there is time enough for you to change your mind."

"You play and sing?" he said, abruptly indicating the open piano. "Of course—I heard you last night."

"Yes—but rarely. My mother sings charmingly—even still, and has been practising this morning. I have been well taught, and I believe sing correctly and play with moderate execution, but I can't give expression to anything that is struggling within me—in music."

"You draw or paint, perhaps?"

"No; I tried once—but it doesn't satisfy me.

"Then you read?"

"What a catechism! And I am obliged to make the humiliating confession that books have not a great charm for me. When I was a girl I used to be very fond of reading, but as soon as I began to *live* myself, the taste left me. Science and positive facts were too immense to grapple with. A human heartbreak is of more consequence than the sun's component parts. You don't think so; well, it seems so to me. I'd rather be helped by the honestly told experience of one human soul, than by all the facts and theories in the universe and all the books that were ever written."

She moved to the window and stood, drawing on her long gloves, gazing out upon the western sky. She wore a closely fitting mantle bordered with sable. A little fur cap set upon her abundant hair, and a cluster of tea roses fastened at her throat, gave her a coquettish air quite at variance with her morning's aspect.

"The day has become overcast," she said. "It is almost a relief after the overpowering glare. I sometimes wish for the subdued tones and grey skies which I remember in England. One wearies of this vivid Riviera colouring."

"You have not been in England for a long time?"

"Not since my stepfather's death eleven years ago. I was only seventeen when I left it. There, Mr. Warrender, I have told you a secret which most women would guard jealously. That is a simple sum in addition, and the product will give you my age. But there are social philosophers who maintain that a woman is in the zenith of her charms at thirty."

"At any rate," said Mrs. Kilsyth, entering, "no woman ever gets beyond that age as long as she has a shred of good looks remaining. Haven't you observed that every frisky matron one meets was married at sixteen? Don't you admire our flowers, Mr. Warrender? Two of these bouquets arrived from Paris this morning."

"And this one?" asked Warrender, pointing to a magnificent floral trophy that completely covered the small table which supported it.

"Oh, that! From Nice, I imagine. It was Colonel Cazalette's

New Year's gift to me. Those full-blown camellias are very appropriate to my mature charms. Now there's a sentiment about his little offering to Varuna which suggests quite a different idea."

She stretched her hand towards a quaintly-shaped vase of old Venetian glass, in which were loosely placed a mass of yellow roses drooping upon their leaves; then, rebuked by her daughter's glance, rattled on:

"Come; I hear the bells of Mrs. Featherstone's ponies jingling. There is the inevitable Lord Bretland pursuing his system of education. General Featherstone tacked on to our new drawing-room *prima-donna*, Miss Violet Rochford, and provided with a *motif*, is happily bent upon self-improvement also. Now we are going to be truly arcadian—music and sentiment; tea under the pines; wild flowers, singing birds, and all the rest of it; only, unfortunately, there are no birds hereabouts, they've substituted Cupids instead."

Mrs. Kilsyth was in her most light-hearted vein. When Colonel Cazalette appeared, she dropped him a little curtsey and thanked him demurely for his attention. There remained no trace of the confusion, almost alarm, which she had exhibited upon his arrival the night before. If there had been any doubt in the mind of either as to their attitude towards each other, they had evidently arrived at an understanding, and the only signs of anxiety which Mrs. Kilsyth displayed were an occasional furtive glance directed towards his face, and a nervous start which she now and then gave when he addressed her suddenly.

Conversation flowed freely as the open landau in which these four were seated bowled swiftly along the pretty sea-girt road towards Mentone. Its burden was sustained chiefly by Cazalette, who discoursed with the fluency of a travelled, cultivated man bent upon making himself agreeable. Mrs. Kilsyth's questions were numerous; she seemed uneasy when a moment's silence fell upon the group. Madame Fano spoke little, and it must be owned that Warrender appeared at first to no great advantage, yet even he, stimulated by the elder man's tact in drawing forth his resources, and by a faint gleam of animation upon Varuna's face when he pointedly addressed her, made amends towards the close of the drive for his taciturnity at its commencement.

It was perhaps natural that his mind should have already begun to exercise itself in speculations concerning Cazalette's motives, antecedents and possible interest in Madame Fano. Cazalette's manner to Varuna was at once distant and deferential;

he spoke to her but seldom. Yet Warrender fancied that he detected in sundry looks and gestures the evidence of a warm regard. No prejudice could declare him to be an adventurer in the vulgar sense of the term. His whole bearing was that of a gentleman far removed from vicious or Bohemian proclivities. He trod upon undebateable ground. His careless allusions to affairs and to persons of note living and deceased showed familiarity with the politics and social life of a somewhat earlier date. He belonged to the world, yet seemed apart from it. He did not play, yet had apparently frequented the various gaming places in Europe. Of his poverty he spoke without affectation. His manner had something of the cynicism and sadness of a recluse, and was faintly tinged by sacerdotalism; one involuntarily connected him with the Catholic Church. Of art he showed considerable knowledge; he seemed well read, and his speech was at times almost poetic.

As the carriage turned into the olive-shaded road which led to the cape, Warrender pulled his thoughts together and rebuked himself for having indulged in romantic conjecture.

"What a fool I am," he muttered, "to imagine the first well-mannered foreigner I meet a Jesuit in disguise!"

It was at this point that he exerted himself to join in the conversation, and succeeded so far as to banish, for the present, sinister insinuations.

A spirit of harmony seemed now to have crept over the quartette. Mrs. Kilsyth's eyes no longer wandered uneasily from Cazalette to her daughter, and Madame Fano leaned back against the cushions, her former erect attitude succeeded by one pliant and unconstrained, her face, if pensive, full of sweetness. Warrender's vague distrust and painful expectation of harrowing discovery had melted into a dream-like sense of well-being. But for that subtle element which Mrs. Featherstone had described as a suggestion of tragedy in the background, the drive would have been to him but a commonplace incident, and his companions' charming worldliness untouched by any more complex influences than the pastime of the hour, and the ordinary interests of that butterfly society of which they formed part. The carriage drew up at the end of the point. Here, breakers were roaring against a fringe of jagged white rocks which terminated the cape. Foam dashed over the low undergrowth of lentiscus and myrtle. The sea stretched grey and hazy to the horizon, and a veiled sun shed a track of misty brightness across the bay. Monte Carlo lay like a jewel in the curve, the rugged heights behind and tower of Turbia clearly defined against the sky. To the east, Mentone and the

promontories of Italy lay slumberous. There was brooding and faint melancholy in the air. From the sea shore a rocky path led to a forest of pines wind-swept into fantastic shapes, where the atmosphere was pungent with a resinous odour, and the rosemary grew high. Here, in a sheltered nook, the rest of the party had already arranged themselves; a hamper half unpacked lay upon the grass, and Mrs. Featherstone, clad in a becoming tailor-made costume, was on her knees coaxing a refractory wood fire into a blaze.

"Now," she exclaimed, rising, her pretty face rosy after her exertions, "just by way of contrast and as a sort of tribute to those lanky gum-trees you all admire so much, I'm going to relapse for a short time into my original condition of barbarism. I can't make a damper, Mr. Warrender, for I don't suppose there is a sheet of bark handy; but for once in your lives, you shall all drink quart pot tea. The taste is, like other things, indigenous to the Australian soil, so I shall not expect you to be enthusiastic in your appreciation. Lord Bretland, you are out of office for the present, but you may make yourself useful if you please. Where are the implements?"

Lord Bretland rummaged in the hamper and produced a bright tin can, which he held at arms-length.

"I am instructed to inform the company that this is a—*billy*," he observed in his melancholy drawl.

"No, indeed!" energetically cried Mrs. Featherstone; "no such thing. It is merely a vulgar Birmingham imitation. A *billy* should be smoked black; it should be saturated with rank tea, battered, dented, and generally disreputable, with an odour of grass-tree tops, bandicoots and black fellows, mingled with the delicate aroma of store tobacco. Well"—mournfully—"fill it with water and put it on the fire."

Lord Bretland obeyed, then brought forth two utensils resembling half-quartern measures, and a dozen tin mugs strung together by the handles.

"And these," he continued in the same tone, "are quart pots and pannikins, commonly used by the stockmen and aboriginals in Australia: while this"—exhibiting a brown caky substance which looked like burnt toffee—"is the nearest approach procurable in Monte Carlo to what Mrs. Featherstone calls 'ration sugar,' a commodity practically unknown in this hemisphere."

"I can't compliment you upon being a very efficient assistant," retorted that lady with a little grimace. "Evidently your sphere lies yonder—in the gilded haunts of civilization. My word! Lord Bretland—to fall back upon the phraseology of my

youth—I'd just like to see you bushed in a mallee scrub. There! I will have nothing more to do with you. Come, Mr. Warrender, it isn't the first time you and I have stood together by a camp fire. Be ready to throw in the tea and sugar and to stir up with a bit of stick as soon as the water boils."

Warrender, lending himself to the humour of the moment, did as he was bidden; and all stood round intently gazing, while the operation was conducted with a solemnity befitting the incantations of a witch. The flame mounted, the fir cones crackled; the critical instant arrived. Warrender added first the tea, then the sugar, while Mrs. Featherstone stirred vigorously with a crooked stick; finally the decoction was delivered to Lord Bretland, who with great gravity poured it from one quart pot to another till commanded by Mrs. Featherstone to desist. The beverage was then declared ready for drinking and handed round in pannikins. Each guest drank, made a wry face and then called variously for sherry and seltzer, and cream.

"Oh, I say, Mrs. F-f-f-featherstone," stuttered Captain Bland, who had attached himself to the party, "isn't this all ch-ch-chaff? You don't mean that you d-d-drink that stuff in Australia?"

"Never anything else," rejoined she imperturbably. "It is supposed to have an effect upon the brain, Captain Bland. That's what makes all us Australians so sharp. Now, you may have some egg sandwiches, if you like, to take the taste out of your mouth."

The gipsy tea was on the whole a success. Mrs. Featherstone had at all events the knack of putting everyone on good terms with himself or herself, and if she was audacious, it was a pleasant audacity. Some one started singing catches, and the voices sounded sweetly among the pines and mingled with the monotonous swash of the sea. Then Mr. Braunstein, appealing to Miss Rochford, suggested a German part-song, which was followed by the 'Lorelei' with Heine's words.

"Ah," murmured Mrs. Kilsyth, "I prefer the Hans Breitmann version of 'Die Mädchen mit nodings on.' It harmonises better with the company and the quart pot tea."

Like all such impromptu concerts, this one descended by slow gradations to the music-hall level.

There is a fascination in shrieking upon a foreign shore a comic breakdown or 'Rule Britannia' which the typical cockney cannot resist, certainly not Captain Bland, whose announcement, in a piping falsetto, that Britons "never never ne-ever would be slaves," was effusively echoed by the more patriotic and less highly cultivated of the little assemblage.

"There's a good deal of freedom about that chorus," observed Mrs. Kilsyth to Colonel Cazalette. He had stationed himself beside her, though his eyes were fixed upon Varuna and Warrender, who were standing together a little distance apart from the rest. "Could any set of people but the English make themselves so supremely ridiculous? 'Rule Britannia' always reminds me of a cock crowing down a nightingale. No; Captain Bland, don't ask me to join you. I'm not a Briton—I'm only a woman."

"*Only a woman*," murmured Mr. Braunstein in a tone of deep meaning.

"All nationalities are alike to me," continued Mrs. Kilsyth. "I'm above prejudices. I'd even go so far as to hail a chimpanzee as man and brother. I hate your 'nice little, tight little island' cant; the self-laudation and hypocrisy; the straight walk along the narrow road, elbows out, and no grace for a sinner, the breakfast at nine, the luncheon at one, the dinner at seven—ugh! Am I hurting any one's sensibilities? Isn't that Mrs. Livingstone, with the association of wool workers from the *Nationale* at Mentone, rounding the point? To your tents, oh Israel; the Philistines are upon us."

"Come this way," whispered Colonel Cazalette with gentle imperativeness. "I want to talk to you."

The appearance of Mrs. Livingstone and her cohort was the signal for a general dispersion. In such case the laws of natural attraction decide the pairing of a company of both sexes. Warrender and Varuna, forsaking the great pine grove, bent their steps towards the wind-swept cape. It was a rough way, and their hands frequently touched as he guided her over the shingle. At last, she seated herself upon a granite boulder, below which the water lay in miniature pools, and tangled masses of seaweed had gathered in mounds of shiny greenish brown. The wind blew in, salt and exhilarating but touched with chill. It stirred Varuna's furs and loosened the bunch of roses at her throat; they fell and were borne by the breeze over the rocks. Warrender would have rescued them, but she interposed. "Never mind; they have done their duty, and I have more at home." After a pause she asked, without looking towards her companion, "What do you think of Colonel Cazalette?"

Warrender hesitated. "It is a difficult question. He is the sort of man about whom it would be impossible to form an opinion after a few hours' acquaintance."

"I don't agree with you. He has a distinct individuality. The only people worth thinking about are those who affect one definitely at first sight."

"He certainly does that."

"And he impressed you last night—disagreeably?"

"Since you insist upon frankness, my first feeling was that I should be sorry to trust him."

"You were right," she replied gravely. "Don't trust him."

"Yet you seem to have known Colonel Cazalette intimately, Madame Fano."

"I saw a great deal of him five or six years ago. He had a strong influence over my mother and was a sort of lay confessor to her when she was in one of her transition states of belief. I am not speaking heartlessly, Mr. Warrender. You must see that my mother is impulsive, changeable—and loveable as a child. As regards myself, Colonel Cazalette is associated in my memory with painful events. Now," she said in a different tone, "you will tell me something more about my sister Helena. Is it a pleasure to you, or the reverse, talking of her?"

Warrender winced at the question. "I am glad to talk of her, Madame Fano, if you are interested—but——"

"Yes, I think that I understand. I have fancied that the mention of her name jarred upon you. If I seem wanting in perception you must recollect that I am reading an unfamiliar language. I am sure that you are too sincere and direct to shrink because of self-love or wounded vanity. It seems to me that a true man, having once loved a woman, must, whatever happens, hold her in tender remembrance. You would be surprised if you could know how much I have been thinking of you and Helena this afternoon."

"You love your sister."

"That is perhaps putting it too strongly. I know so little of her. She was a child when I left England—a thin, quiet little thing with long fair hair, earnest eyes, a solemn way with her, and a most extraordinary faculty for adoration. She was just the sort of child whom as a woman one would expect to sacrifice herself for a creed, an idea, a sentiment. I can't imagine her an ordinary flesh-and-blood girl of the period. There's a tone in her letters not of the earth, earthy. I daresay that she is weak; all creatures of beliefs are so. Am I right?"

"I had no reason to think her weak," replied Warrender a little bitterly; "at all events, she did not believe in me. What should you like to know about her, Madame Fano? She is tall and slender now, with a sort of girlish stateliness that is rather difficult to describe. She has deep dark eyes, and is not much given to laughter. I used to think that her views of life were too serious, and that she thought too much of others. But before long you will be able to judge for yourself."

"I have never known what it is to have a woman friend," said Varuna as though excusing her interest; "and Helena is my half-sister—except my mother and my little girl, nearer to me than any one in the world. Hers will be a new influence in my life, perhaps a happy one. If, as her letters seem to say, she believes in me, loves me, thinks only good of me, there would be a motive for sacrifice—for endeavour——" She paused. Warrender did not immediately reply. "You think me very self-absorbed?" said Varuna looking at him directly. "You are right; egoism is the curse of a nature like mine. My interest in Helena merely takes the form of speculation as to how she will affect me."

"No," said Warrender nervously. "I haven't thought much of such things; but it seems to me that finely-strung natures must always be more or less egoistic. It is a question of nerves, and of the capability of receiving vivid impressions. But you have surely the strongest motive for effort in life—your child."

Madame Fano's face was darkened by an expression of deep sadness, but a moment later there passed over her features a curious gleam of tenderness softening their fixity.

"That in which one's existence is bound, is not merely a motive," she answered in a low voice. "Had you a fancy that I did not care for my little girl? Well, perhaps my manner justified the thought. Mr. Warrender, I have sometimes wished, prayed that my child might die. The maimed speech, the cramped intelligence, the dumb eyes, are living reproaches to me for a wrong unconsciously committed—reminders of an injury which I can never forget or forgive. What right have people"—her voice vibrated with passionate earnestness—"to weight other lives with all that is bad in themselves—and worse—worse? I can't explain myself, and it is impossible for you to understand."

"I do understand." His eyes bright with indignant pity met hers. "The suffering which is brought upon the innocent is the saddest problem in life."

"It can't be altered or made better. There's a sort of poison in such sorrow," she said.

"No, it can't be altered, or healed quite, on this side of the grave."

"But you think," she said eagerly, "that there might be a way of escaping from the hopelessness—the dreariness?"

"For you?" he asked simply. "You are so young still, Madame Fano—too young to be crushed, too good and true to become hard and cynical. Give up this false, artificial life, and go and live with your child. You don't know what there may be for you in the future. There will be peace; there may be love."

Varuna's face showed no hardness or indifference now. She

seemed to hang upon his words as though they were prophetic. Her eyes were clear and dilated; her lips trembled. She was quite silent for a minute; then she said falteringly:

"But you don't know. You have not realised. My little girl is almost an idiot. She is deaf and dumb. They said—they said that it was because I had been unhappy. I had suffered . . . I can't speak of it. Don't ask me any questions. You see that hope is taken from me."

There was a painful pause; and then—

"You said," urged Warrender gently, "that after this year you would play no more."

"I mean to give it up," she answered, "if the passion is not too strong for me. I don't know if I can live without excitement of some kind. I was quite in earnest about my superstitious belief that this year will decide my fate. And now you make me almost hope that there may be brightness in store for me. Mr. Warrender, every woman who is without the true knowledge of happiness, craves for a means of escape from the vapid flatness of existence. Some women find it in dress, gaiety, and flirtation. These have no charms for me, and surely do not demoralise less than *roulette*. And I have justified gambling to myself. You know that I was poor, and that my mother's income only lasts during her life. I wished to win money so that I might be independent, and thus provide for my little girl's future. I have won nearly enough—not quite . . . . Come," she added, rising, "we have talked a long time. Let us join the rest."

"You are not displeased with me," said Warrender, in a beseeching tone. "I know that I have no right to speak to you in this way."

"Yes; you have a certain right," she replied with an air of forced playfulness. "You are going some day to marry my sister. That is a reason why we should be frank with each other."

The red mounted to Warrender's brow.

"I had rather," he said slowly, "that you would leave your sister out of the question, and give me the right on different grounds."

"How?" she asked.

"It would be the greatest pleasure to me to feel that you trusted me, and that I might consider myself your friend apart from the possibility of any nearer bond."

"I do trust you. Concerning my friendship, I think that, with an impulsiveness which is not usual with me, I offered it to you the first evening we met. As for the other possibility, we will talk of it no more—till Helena comes."

TEMPLE BAR.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY."

MARCH 1884.

Peril.

By JESSIE FOTHERGILL.

Author of 'The First Violin,' 'Kith and Kin,' etc.

PART I.

AT 61 GREAT NORTH STREET.

Chapter VI.

PAUL LAWFORD TO MRS. WOODFALL.

"YOU may rejoice or not, Katty, when you hear that fate, or something, seems to bind my fortunes up with those of the Nowell clan. One of their staff at the office has had the great good sense to take himself off to Canada to join a brother out there; and I have got his place. It isn't much of a thing, but with it, and fifty pounds out of my income, I can live very well, and the other hundred a year you will keep on Humphrey's account and your own. My post may improve, of course; I may get promoted and my salary too. You may be sure I shall let you know when such is the case. Now that I have got it, I may tell you that the feeling of having work of any kind is like being in heaven, a trite comparison—only that nothing is trite that you realise very strongly. That is the first and foremost piece of news. The next is, that I have, by an accident, become acquainted with further particulars of the drama going on at 61, Great North Street. It waxes more amusing, because the plot is thickening. The other morning I was at the office, and Nowell was talking to me. He was very full of a Society to which he belongs, and which has for its object the nationalisation of the land—a sort of thing of which I daresay you have heard before—I have often.

They were going to have a big meeting that night. He was going of course. He was a member of it, and would be on the platform. Would not I go too? Had I formed any convictions on the subject? I never can help teasing him a bit when he asks me questions like that, as if the fate of the world depended upon my answer, so I said, not at all truly, 'None, absolutely none, except that if I had land—much or little—I would stick to it to the last gasp.' And I suggested, while he was hunting in his desk for a pamphlet to put me right on the subject, that I didn't think it would do him any good with his grandfather, if the latter knew that he belonged to a Society like this.

"He burst out laughing, and rubbed his hands.

"'That's the beauty of it,' he said. 'If he knew, he'd be fit to cut me off with a shilling.'

"'Well, isn't it madness?' I expostulated. 'The thing will all be reported, and if you are on the platform, your name will be with the others.'

"'Ay, but then he can't read the papers. Mrs. Robson reads to him every morning, just what she thinks good for him to hear. She won't read that, you may be sure.'

"He laughed confidently; but I remembered what Peril had said, and it seemed to me that they were playing with fire, and might get their fingers burnt some day, perhaps through the revelations of some unconscious Mrs. Magson, or similar person. He had again pressed me to go, and I was on the point of refusing, when Hankinson, the manager, came in.

"'Oh, Mr. Hugh, I didn't know that you were here.'

"I had always noticed how vastly civil he was to 'Mr. Hugh,' and had concluded that it was policy—with an eye to the future. So it is, partly; but there is another reason as well, and a very natural one.

"'I'll be ready in a moment,' says Hugh. 'I've been telling Mr. Lawford, whose politics are in an unsatisfactory condition, that he had better go with us to the land meeting to-night.'

"'Perhaps Mr. Lawford's politics are like my own—not quite so reckless as yours,' said Hankinson. He has rather a soapy smile, but there is no doubt he is a first-rate man of business. He turned to me and added:

"'I should be delighted to have a supporter to-night. I am going to take care of my daughter and Miss Nowell'—I pricked up my ears—'as Mr. Hugh is going on the platform; and however independent they may be, I don't think it fit for them to be alone. Will you join us at our evening meal, and go with us, Mr. Lawford?'

"I suppose this wonderful civility is chiefly due to the fact that I am a friend of the heir-apparent. I was pleased to have the chance of seeing Peril again, and I felt some curiosity concerning Miss Hankinson, about whom I have heard from different people at different times. I professed myself delighted to accept the invitation. Nowell said that they would call for me on their way to Mr. Hankinson's, and so we parted.

"I was quite ready at the appointed time, and I suppose you will burst out laughing when I further reveal, that on the chance, so remote that you might almost call it non-existent, of Miss Nowell's coming in, and being for two minutes within my dwelling, I spent a full quarter of an hour in walking up and down that wretched little den, altering the furniture, and, as I intended, making it put its best side foremost. Alas, Katty! vagabond though I am, I am not yet up to the dodges of professional lodging-house keepers. All my labour was for nought. I had better have let the things alone, as I found when it was too late. I discovered that the existing arrangement, which I had never cared to disturb before, hideous though I had often thought it, was intended to make the best of a bad business, and to conceal the ravening and wickedness in the background. Rickety legs there were in abundance; backs of sofas all one horrible rag; tables with broad, deep flaps, carefully placed over rents in the carpet, making as it were a cave to conceal the iniquity, and so forth. The last state of that place was worse than the first; and when my operations were completed, they presented every appearance of the most brutal ravages. Of course there was no danger of their coming in. I must have been mad to dream of such a thing. They called at the door, and I rushed out, leaving my landlady to make what she would or could of the *débris* I had left behind me. We all three walked to Hankinson's. He does not live far away, in a street called Queen Street; and he must have a very good berth at Mr. Nowell's, for his house is nearly as large as his master's and in a very much pleasanter situation.

"Miss Hankinson—Margaret is her name, and it seems to suit her, but I don't know why—is a girl, or young woman, with a plain face, a good figure, splendid eyes, and very fine and sympathetic manners. Her voice is delightful; and I could imagine that what I have heard of her is true—that she has been heard to say, no such thing as an 'odious' person exists for her. I don't know whether that is strength or weakness; I should imagine it might be either, according to circumstances, but I can quite believe that it is her nature. She makes a very agreeable hostess, self-forgetful and unaffected; we had a very pleasant meal, and I found my

usual amusement in watching the others. What a blessing it is, when, being incapacitated one's self, either by having already lived one's life, or by poverty and insignificance, or by all combined, as in my case, from even thinking of taking any active part one's self, one can derive amusement at any rate, if not excitement, from the spectacle of one's neighbours, and their pushings and strugglings, their writhings and gaspings. One sees them there, desperately in earnest; this one holding both his sides with laughter, that one calling upon the heavens to fall and crush her, because of her great misery; eyes gleaming, lips parted, faces all aglow with battle, or hope, or eagerness, or else pale with despair or convulsed with passion; and one wonders what it is all about. It is easy enough to know, I suppose. They are all fighting for something that is to make them happy, or else they are agonised by the loss of it; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is not anything which is necessary to existence, or probably even to comfort; but they have set their hearts upon it, and imagined it into something indispensable; and when one sees the result, one feels glad one has shaken one's self free of it all, and learnt how very easy it is to do without all these things."

[Mrs. Woodfall, *loquitur:* "Poor dear Paul! He says that to cheer me up, and make me think that he is rather enjoying himself than otherwise. Does he think I don't know that he knows as well as I do, that it is just the being in or out of that stream which makes the difference between living and existing? And does he suppose I can't see that he is thinking a great deal too much about this uncanny girl, whom I don't half like? unless, indeed, she were to be inspired to fall in love with Paul, and give over thinking of this stupid cousin, who seems to me to be a very conceited young man."]

"But I won't preach. I know you don't like it. I was going to tell you about things. I like Miss Hankinson very much, and Hugh thinks he is in love with her. Not a very unusual phase in a young man's history, is it, for him to imagine himself in love with a charming and accomplished woman, older than himself? He is a good, ingenuous, *naïf* creature. He has such a frank face, it does me good to look at him. And he is so proud of being, as he thinks, in love with such a superior woman, that he cannot help letting everyone see his state of feeling. She seems to me to behave very well about it, and very sensibly. She has the upper hand of her own feelings, at any rate, which is what might naturally be expected. I wondered how Peril would take it, and found that, whether from pride or because she is really a person who uses exaggerated language, and gives you the idea that she

thinks a great deal more of people than is really the case, she behaved as if it were the most natural thing in the world. She was a good deal more animated than usual, with almost a flush on her cheeks, and looking perfectly marvellous for beauty. It came into my head that she means to fight a battle with Miss Hankinson for the great prize, Hugh Nowell. Of course she will win, because Miss Hankinson, unless I am much mistaken, would withdraw from the combat as soon as it became a question of seriously combating.

"Nearly all the time we were at the table there was a great deal of talking about a failure there has been of some Hutchinsons—old-established people here. It will not enlighten you much when I tell you it is the town's talk. Old Nowell is their creditor to the tune of between eight and ten thousand pounds; and it seems he means to screw it out of them, every penny, while all the other creditors are ready and wishful to come to an arrangement. If he insists, and presses his claim, it will upset everything; because it would be most unjust to the other creditors, don't you see, for one of them, and him the richest of the lot, to get twenty shillings in the pound, while others had to put up with fifteen, or less. Instead of the Hutchinsons being able to liquidate by arrangement, they would have to be made bankrupts, which is what old Nowell is aiming at, as they are much hated by him, for the very human and natural reason that they treated him well when he was their servant, but wouldn't admit him to their drawing-room in later life—so far as I can make out. Hugh and Hankinson have, after much deliberation, decided to take the matter in their own hands, and practise a pious fraud—that, namely, of paying old Nowell his debt out of his own money, and making him believe, *pro tem.*, that it has been extracted with much difficulty from the Hutchinsons, with great detriment to their convenience. It was Peril who originally suggested this proceeding, in a joke, and they are carrying it out in earnest, as it is considered almost certain that these Hutchinsons will eventually pay up honourably and fully. Little else was talked about at tea. They laughed very much at the idea of circumventing the old gentleman so cleverly, and I noticed that Peril seemed very much interested, and took far more share in the conversation than she usually does. After tea, when we were waiting for the cab that was to take us to the meeting, she said to me that she was enjoying this, because she knew it would almost kill him with rage if ever he came to hear of it.

"'Well,' said I, 'don't you feel a little nervous, and afraid that he might get to hear of it?'

"'How you do croak! You said something like that once before; and, as I told you then, he cannot get to know anything of the kind, unless one were deliberately to tell him of it, and I suppose that is just the one point on which Mrs. Robson and I are agreed—rather to have our tongues cut out than speak a syllable to betray Hugh.'

"Hugh, at that moment, was absorbed in conversation with Miss Hankinson, over some pamphlets that they seemed to be examining. Peril's eye fell upon them, and a look came over her face—not a pleasant look. I believe she was going to say something to me, but the cab came, and we set off.

"We certainly never expected any excitement at the meeting; indeed, I was going simply because it interested me to be with the other people who were of the party. We had area tickets, but the places were not numbered. We got down early, therefore, to get good seats, and arrived before the time advertised for the doors to be open. Hugh, who spoke with authority, said he thought we could get in through the committee-room. I could hardly help smiling at the lad, and his earnestness and gravity. He thought they were going to deal a blow to-night at the existing system of land-tenure, which would make it reel and stagger, if it did not fell it altogether—a blow from which it would never really recover. Full of the joy of official authority—for he is on the Darkingford Branch Committee of the Society, and was likewise a steward, or something—he led us into the committee-room, and through it into the hall. We started back in astonishment. It was packed—area, back of the hall, galleries, every corner—with an audience which must have been there long enough. How they got there seemed to be a mystery. The big doors were not open, and there was none of the bustle usual at such times of waiting. Some of the men seated on the front benches were grim-looking fellows enough, knowing, I should say, precious little about land-tenure, right or wrong, and caring even less; but ready for a row, though they looked quiet enough then. We stood, gazing feebly at the overflowing benches, and looking foolish enough, I dare say.

"'Holloa!' said Hugh to a brother official who came up; 'what's the meaning of this? How did they get here?'

"'They must have come in by one of the side-doors; and the meaning is, unless we take care—a row.'

"'Why should there be a row?'

"'You'll see. We have sent word to the police, but of course we don't want to look as if we were afraid, or suspected anything. Cadman, who knows this sort of thing well, tells me there are

lots of Irish here—Land-leaguers probably—who will behave decently enough if we let them alone; but he thinks there are a lot of Church of England Tory roughs; and history knows what they are—and so do we.'

"Hugh nodded, but his eyes glittered with excitement, and I felt a little curiosity myself.

"'Peril, and Miss Hankinson, you will go home of course. If there is going to be a disturbance, you are best away,' said Master Hugh, who is an ardent advocate for women's rights.

"He spoke with all the authority of a lord of creation.

"'Go home, indeed!' said Peril. 'If there's going to be a row, Hugh, I shall stop and see it. I never heard of such a cool proposal. You'll stay, won't you, Miss Hankinson?'

"'I am quite sure Miss Hankinson will see that it is best to go home,' he said resentfully.

"'Miss Hankinson sees that if we get a comfortable place upstairs in the boxes, it will be much the best to stay and see it out. I quite agree with Miss Nowell."

"Foiled in his endeavour to enforce them to betray feminine timidity, and as Mr. Hankinson and I loudly applauded their resotion, Hugh had nothing for it but to comply. He piloted us to one of the boxes. They are, you must know, only five in number, and are, as it were, hung up in the air, near the roof, above the gallery, facing the platform—quite out of reach of disturbance, and commanding an excellent view of the hall and everything in it.

"I am past experiencing any feeling save one of amusement at such things, or I should say it was a very remarkable sight that we saw—this immense hall, which is oftenest used for peaceful entertainments, such as concerts, bazaars, and amateur theatricals, filled, till it could hold no more, with an audience composed almost entirely of men, and those men mostly rough, black, and unkempt-looking. All the people with any pretensions to position or gentility were on the platform—a good many women amongst them—and by-and-by the proceedings began.

"From the very first it was evident that there was an unruly, contradictory spirit abroad. There were exponents of theories both for and against the nationalisation of land on the platform. We saw Hugh, looking very happy and expectant, in the second row. In the chair they had got—whether as an example of all virtue, or as a living warning against the folly of self-sacrifice, I know not—but they had captured and placed in the chair a youngish man, who is so enraptured with the views they hold, that he has, in order to carry them out practically, presented his

patrimonial acres to the Society, who are manipulating them according to their convictions of how land should be held; and this worthy gentleman is under the firm impression that in a few years—say in the course of this generation or the next—so many great landholders will have followed his example that Government will be forced to see which way things are tending, and will 'act accordingly.' One does not know whether to be most amused or most dejected by the discovery of such conduct. He may be pleased and satisfied with what he has done, but he is a melancholy-looking object. In his opening address, he looked round with a ghastly smile upon the assembled multitude, and in a hollow voice said, he wished to review the past, and give his views upon the probable future. Some persons had told them to be courageous, and to hope; for his part, he considered that hope was a vain feeling. (A voice from the background: 'Thou looks as if thou did, lad! cheer up a bit!') After he had reduced us to the last stage of melancholy foreboding by his lugubrious tones, and still more lugubrious sentiments, and had given us to understand that though he hoped nothing, still he meant to go on working just as if he did, he called upon another man to speak, and sat down.

"I'm not going to bore you with an account of all the speeches. The first man told us how he was going to take the land and give it to the people who had a right to it. He worked us up into a state of some excitement by repeating the well-known stories of Irish rack-renting and wholesale evictions, and the ghastly tales of the Sutherland and other Scotch clearings. Is it not wonderful how we know these things, and go on hearing about them and reading about them, and work ourselves up into 'states' about them, at meetings, and never *do* anything? What a vast, endless leavening is required, before that huge mass, the British public, begins to work! While he spoke there was a good deal of interruption, many cat-calls, and much whistling; but he 'got through,' as the Yankees would say.

"Then the next man spoke against the nationalisation of land, and in favour of the present system of tenure. I can't imagine why they let him. It is a way some of these ultra-reformers have, of thinking that every man has a right to be heard—that all sides of a question should be studied, and that if you treat your opponents with courtesy, and listen carefully to what they have to say, you may get a few useful hints from them. A committee of simple Liberals or Tories would have had better sense, and would have squashed him at once. It would have been better, in fact, if he had been squashed; for he roused up the

Land-leaguers, if Land-leaguers they were. I don't say that they were; it was what I heard. When they heard that the present state of things bore distinct evidence of its divine origin, and perfect fitness for the wants of the people at large, they got restive, and fidgeted about a good deal. From that moment the fun began to grow faster. We could see exactly where the disturbance came from—a knot or body of a hundred or so, I should say, almost immediately below us in the hall. They flung various jeers at this man, and the other party upheld him with vigorous language. The galleries began to be troubled, and to move about restlessly. But this man—he was a parson of some sort—got his speech finished. He said his say, and sat down; and then our hilarious chairman rose again, and expressed a hope that the same courtesy would be extended to Mr. Lorrimer as had been allowed to the last speaker. A little more, I hoped; but we were to prove the truth of the chairman's words, that hope was a vain feeling—at any rate, when it expects decent behaviour from an irate and unruly mob.

"The chairman sat down. Mr. Lorrimer rose up—an aristocrat born, a democrat by force of conviction; a gentleman, mind you, in the old severe sense of the word—what the Jingo mob below would have called a 'swell.' He began in accents which instantly proclaimed the man of breeding.

"'Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.' At least, I suppose he began in that way. We heard as far as 'Mr. Chair——' and not another syllable; for almost simultaneously with his getting on his legs there arose a din compared with which I should fancy pandemonium would seem mild and quiet. Hollow groaning, as loud as thunder, and far more horrid than the most tremendous clap I ever heard; for thunder does not express evil passions—it is grand: this was hideous. A perfect tempest of yells and hisses accompanied it, and utterly drowned the applause of those who wished to welcome Mr. Lorrimer. They did their best: they madly waved hats and handkerchiefs, they shouted and stamped and cheered—in vain. Nothing could silence that awful groaning; which was the most horrible thing I ever heard out of a nightmare. It was a row with a vengeance, though it had not got to a head yet: the opposing parties were trying their respective strengths. I have heard—but it is only hearsay, and I don't vouch for the truth of it—that the public interest in favour of the question they were going to discuss was not enough to bring together a sufficient audience in support of it to fill the hall, and an immense body of roughs, raving for war, king, and constitution, as the lowest deep of the mob always does, had

organised a 'spree' for themselves, and the complete wreck of the meeting. There were enough who were in favour of the meeting to make a sturdy resistance; but the roughs had it, and it was a spectacle for gods and men. Mr. Lorrimer faced the *vacarme* for some time, trying to speak. If he still continued to hold firmly to his theory of the land for the people he must have strong convictions, for this section of the people pelted him with their sweetest favours for a prolonged period. By-and-by he folded his arms, looked very pale and scornful, and stared at them.

"'Grand!' observed Peril, in an excited whisper. 'Much he cares for them! Oh, doesn't he look fine? These are the people that Hugh is always upholding.'

"'Poor wretches!' said Miss Hankinson, not less excited, though much quieter. 'If they were not quite so ignorant and so miserable, they might behave differently.'

"Mr. Lorrimer's defiant aspect and steady stare at last produced a pause in the groaning and yelling. His supporters took advantage of it to sing lustily a stave of 'He's a jolly good fellow.' They were soon drowned in a new and much stronger outburst of shrieks, hoots, yells, hisses, and groans. The most unearthly calls resounded from every part of the building. The whole gallery surged about underneath us just like real waves of a troubled sea. Every now and then it seemed as if it must inevitably go over and break upon the heads of those below, but it did not. The area of the hall was in a state of chaos; and at last I beheld a long black thing slowly rising up, and after a little while discovered that our Irish friends below, with two long benches, were charging full broadside into the ranks of the others. I dare say not one in a hundred knew what it was all about; but some had come intending to support Lorrimer and his friends, and others, the majority, to oppose him, and this was how they carried it out. The Jingo part of the mob retaliated by driving other benches end-foremost into their assailants, and routing them effectually. Foiled in their attempt to clear the decks of the supporters of the grand old system of land-tenure, as at present existing, they uplifted their voices and sang 'The wearing of the Green' (I don't know how it is that that song always sets my whole being in perturbation; I could laugh, and I could cry, too —it is like the people of the land from which it springs).

"Looking towards the platform just then, I saw that Mr. Lorrimer, bent nearly double, was stooping down delivering his speech into the ear of a solitary reporter who had clambered upon the table, and was taking it down. His brethren of the

press, who sat round the table, and could not hear a syllable, were waiting till he should come down and share it with them. Some gentlemen were consulting with the chairman, I suppose, as to what was best to be done, and one or two voices were uplifted, demanding to know where the police were. Just at that moment a man, who was inflamed with rage at the idea of any man being allowed to make a speech which he didn't understand, and thought he did not agree with, was inspired to roar out:

"'He's talking high treason and blasphemy, d—n him! Pull him down! Go for the platform!'

"And with one wild yell—the articulation, I suppose, of the always-present feeling, the wild-beast rage of these people—they *went* for the platform; and I must confess, it was not a pleasant spectacle. I gave a glance at the two girls. Peril was deadly pale, but was leaning forward, straining towards the platform; her eyes were fixed upon Hugh, I know, who was just behind Mr. Lorrimer, and was fighting to get in front of him. Miss Hankinson had moved from the front of the box a little into the background, and sat looking very pale, her handkerchief rolled up in her hand, and her eyes also fixed on the platform. She is not a coward. She had been enjoying the row before; we all had, I am ashamed to say. She caught my eye, and shook her head with a sickly smile.

"'I thought they had arranged with the police? I wonder where they are?' she said; and, unable to remain still, went to the front again.

"None of us spoke; the yelling was not so persistent and so hideous as it had been, but the onslaught upon the platform was terrific. We saw that Hugh at last got in front of Mr. Lorrimer, and smashed down a great hulking fellow who was scrambling up. He went down with a crash. Peril clapped her hands, Miss Hankinson held her breath; and then, down it came, from the sublime to the ridiculous, with one light tripping step. There was a moment of comparative silence after Hugh had sent this fellow sprawling on his back, and in it he uplifted his voice, and shouted:

"'A force of police will be here in five minutes, and orders have been given to turn out the gas if the meeting does not begin to disperse instantly.'

"It acted like magic. The triumphant hoots and groans gave place to a dejected, murmuring silence. The gallery audience made a rush, with one accord, for the nearest door; all the fighting now was to see who could get out first. The same was going on below. A fine thing, Katty, my dear, is an English mob—or

any mob, I dare say; but I speak of what I know. The police began to arrive, and, under their persuasions, the valiant defenders of the heaven-given rights of our great landed proprietors dispersed; but after all, not till they had accomplished their purpose—set up mob-rule, and effectually foiled the object for which the meeting had been called. It was at an end when the disturbance was over.

"Hugh made a signal that he was coming to join us. Very soon he did. We congratulated him heartily on his prowess, and I ventured to hope that persecution would only strengthen the aims and zeal of the Society. To which he made very little answer; and so delicious was the fresh open air when we got out that we agreed to walk home. Outside we were joined by a friend of Mr. Hankinson's, who walked with him. Hugh and Miss Hankinson were in front, and Miss Nowell and I behind.

"'As we walked along she said to me, suddenly:

"'What do you think of Miss Hankinson?'

"'I like her,' said I, on purpose to draw her out.

"'So does Hugh,' she said drily.

"I don't know whether it showed want of moral courage on my part, but I endeavoured to comfort her by glossing this over.

"'Oh yes!' I said, in a man-of-the-world tone. 'Like lots of other young men without much experience, he thinks himself in love with a fascinating woman older than himself. Numbers of them do it; it is a good sign, I think. It keeps them in good company in the days of their youth, and then the illusion fades away; the beloved object marries, or something happens. They come to themselves, and marry suitably, all the better for their friendship with such a woman in earlier days.'

"'I believe if Hugh imagined himself in love with a person, he would ask her to marry him.'

"'If he asks Miss Hankinson'—I felt her hand spring aside on my arm, and I was sorry for her—'I feel sure she will refuse him.'

"'What makes you think so?' she asked eagerly.

"'Well, perhaps she might not care for him enough,' I said, and nearly added, 'however impossible you may imagine that to be.'

"'Oh—h,' was the cautious reply.

"'Or she may be high-principled, and feel that it would not be for his advantage to marry her.'

"'Well, I don't think it would; do you?'

"'It is utterly impossible for me to judge of that.'

"'Yes, of course,' she said, and gave a sigh; and we said no more about it, but presently separated at the Hankinsons' door.

"Three things are palpable to me—plain as the sun in the heavens, as they say, only I never can tell why, in this climate—first, that Peril Nowell is very much in love with her cousin Hugh, in her moody, impassioned way. I think I have said as much as this before. Next, that Hugh imagines himself, at any rate, very much enamoured of Miss Hankinson. Third, that Mr. Hankinson, from what reason or reasons whatsoever, is desirous above everything that his daughter should marry young Nowell. Another thing in which they are all ardently united—though they can hardly say so outright—is the extreme longing for freedom from bondage, by means of old Mr. Nowell's death. Other things, which I am not at all sure about, are, the reason why both these young women find my good Hugh so attractive. No doubt it is carping and ill-natured on my part, but I would like to see him put through his facings before relying implicitly upon him as a warrior or a champion in the battle of life. He means well, I have not the least doubt, but I feel inclined to say of him sometimes, 'Methinks he doth protest too much.' Another thing I am not sure of is, whether Miss Hankinson would marry him, even if she cared for him a great deal; whether Peril will quarrel with her, or keep quiet; and lastly, how it will end, and what will become of them all before it is settled, is a greater mystery to me than all the rest put together. I write as an outsider, seeing more of the game than they do. And now, good-night. When we have another meeting of the Society for the Nationalisation of the Land in Great Britain and Ireland, I will let you know."

["There is one thing," reflected Mrs. Woodfall, as she finished this epistle, "of which I am perfectly certain, and that is, that if he were not very deeply interested himself, despite his protestations against it, my brother Paul would assuredly never write such sheets and sheets of gossip to me—pure gossip about people of whom I know nothing. I begin to be as curious as himself as to how it will end."]

Chapter VII.

LAWFORD'S PROPHECY TESTED.

Less than a week after this turbulent meeting, Margaret Hankinson sat alone at her writing-table, in the evening. Her subject was "Some Aspects of Darkingford Working Life." It was one with which she was well qualified to deal, and her heart was in it. Her paper was first to be read at a Literary and Philosophical Society, and then published in a review. Her pen flew quickly

along in a somewhat ardent peroration, in which she apostrophised the girls and the women of England, telling them that they were the real overseers of the poor, and pointing out in what way they could best fulfil this office.

"Mr. Hugh Nowell, ma'am, to see you."

She started up and peered a little through the obscurity, for she had no light except that of the reading-lamp which stood on her table.

"I'm disturbing you," he said, pausing, and, as Lawford would have said, dissembling, for he rejoiced to see her alone, and had not the least intention of removing the disturbance.

"No, never mind; my language was becoming a little inflated, I fancy. It will do it no harm to be reconsidered."

"Is Mr. Hankinson out?" asked Hugh, a look of satisfaction on his face.

"Yes; he has to attend a finance committee at the chapel to-night, so he went straight there. Finance committees seem to be provocative of hunger, and they have what Deacon Cash calls a 'good square meal' arranged in the vestry, which they eat before proceeding to business."

"Ah!" The young man looked up at the ceiling, down upon the floor, into the fire—anywhere except at Margaret. The flames flickered brightly upon his dark, handsome face, and shone into a pair of fine, deep eyes. Margaret had placed herself in a chair at the other side of the fireplace, and was playing with her watch-chain. It seemed as if for a long time now she had been accustomed to hear her waiting-maid's voice announcing "Mr. Hugh Nowell, to see you;" and with an aimless triviality she began to wonder if the maid herself had remarked upon it, to such inanity may our thoughts descend.

"I'm glad he is out," said Hugh, in his usual decided tone. "I wanted to have a chat with you. I'm going to London in a few days."

"Are you? On business?"

"Partly. I intend to take a little amusement too. I shall put up with an old chum of mine, who lives there now."

"Shall you be long away?"

"A fortnight, at the outside. I shall not be sorry when it's over. I am very well satisfied with Darkingford."

"You have no business to be satisfied with Darkingford."

"Haven't I! It shows a deficiency in greatness of soul, I suppose. Well, I must go on being deficient in greatness of soul. Besides, it is not such pleasant work that I have to do in London, I can tell you. Seeing stock- and share-brokers, and settling

about investments for somebody else, who thinks he's defrauded if he does not get a hundred per cent. for his money—it isn't exhilarating."

"I dare say. I should call it nervous work."

"So should I, if I didn't think it contemptible to be nervous about things. It's easier by a long way to cut off the coupons of a good investment and send them in at the half year, than to purchase the said coupons—for somebody else, as I said."

"Yes; allow me to wish you well out of all your difficulties, and that you may invest successfully, on, I suppose, Mr. Nowell's behalf?"

Hugh nodded, and then returned to the former topic:

"You scold me for being content with Darkingford; but I suppose what's good enough for you ought to satisfy me."

"What absurd nonsense!"

"I can't think it nonsense."

"You will be a man of property some day, with a career, and the great world open before you. You have no right to let your horizon be bounded by Darkingford. I am a woman, who has found a little work to do here—enough for her strength; therefore I am contented."

"If you will agree to be dissatisfied with it, so will I."

Margaret changed the subject.

"Is Mr. Nowell very well?"

"As well as usual—or perhaps I ought to say, as ill as usual," he replied.

"And your cousin?"

"Peril is quite well too. I am so glad that she came here, and that we went to that meeting the other night."

"Though you did want to force us to return home."

He laughed, with a rising colour.

"It was stupid," he owned, "but I couldn't bear the idea of your being in for anything rough, or getting a push, or anything like that; but I was going to say, that it has brightened Peril up wonderfully. She has been quite a different girl ever since, so bright and animated, and even laughing."

As a simple matter of fact, Peril had taken in, almost at one comprehensive glance, the relative situations, emotional and actual, of Margaret and Hugh, and had begun instinctively to fight the former with weapons as nearly like her own as her very different nature could produce. She had realised, without actually telling herself, that perhaps her own gloom and sullenness had made Margaret's even serenity more attractive to Hugh, and she had begun the uphill fight with her own moodiness in

right earnest; it had given her a sort of object in life, and had produced the change which had struck Hugh.

"Please tell me something about that Mr. Lawford, whom you brought here the other night. Is he a friend of yours?"

"How did you like his looks?"

"Cautious! I liked his looks very much. That was exactly what I did like about him. His looks pleased me better than his talk."

"That's just the case with me," said Hugh eagerly. "I like him, and yet I feel sometimes as if I ought not to like him; I can't make out whether he would be a hero or a villain, he talks so queerly."

"I should say he would want a great deal of goading to be anything at all, hero *or* villain, and then it might be touch and go. His looks proclaim the hero; his talk is *blasé* and a little affected, I think."

"I quite agree with you. I don't believe a man when he makes it out that he cares for nothing, and wishes for nothing."

"Because you care for, and wish for so many things. I dare say he is a much nicer and better man than he would have one suppose. The other night—you must excuse the freedom of the remark—I was quite fascinated with him and your cousin; they are such very beautiful persons. He is not anything like her—neither so splendid-looking, nor so uncommon-looking; but still, he is handsome enough to be far above the average, and the two together were delightful to look at."

"They are handsome, yes," said Hugh, with sublime indifference. "You always harp so upon beauty and beautiful people; for my part, I think beauty, and the influence of beauty, are immensely overrated."

Margaret could not repress a little burst of laughter, musical, like everything uttered by her voice.

"How kind of you to say so," she said, laughing still, with a light of humour in her fine grey eyes. "I feel the compliment deeply. It is like assuring a person, who is under a cloud, that you will continue to think well of him, whatever people may say."

"Continue to think well of you!" echoed Hugh, flushing violently, starting from his seat, and beginning to pace vehemently about.

"Please don't upset my new little ebony table in your agitation, because it has made me very happy, and——"

"If you knew what you make me feel like when you talk in that way!"

"Make you feel like! *What* do you mean?"

"You talk sometimes as if you were the plainest woman in the world instead of one of the most beautiful."

"My dear Hugh!" she said, in a tone of good-natured but somewhat patronising banter, which might or might not be assumed, "you must excuse me if I tell you that you are really talking nonsense; and whether I am beautiful or ugly, I don't see why I should be made to listen to that. Let us talk about something else."

"No; I will not talk about something else," he said, stopping in his promenade, and standing straight in front of her.

Margaret leaned back in her chair with the screen in her hand, and looked up into the lad's handsome face. Despite his indignant expostulations, she was not beautiful with any beauty except that of fine intellectual eyes, and an expression of mind which must have redeemed any face from real plainness. But she was pale, and the lines and contours of her face were not those of beauty; her features were too marked, and the flesh that clothed them followed too faithfully their hollows to admit of actual beauty in her countenance; and her hair, though wavy, was light, almost colourless, giving a somewhat ghostly look to her. She had a fine figure, and beautifully-formed white hands. So much for her physical appearance. Mentally and morally she was well endowed, perhaps even in the aristocracy of that invisible world; she had

> "The reason calm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,"

which are such excellent qualities, and which, when possessed by a woman, are seldom allowed to rust for want of use. The weak-kneed and the strongly-selfish of her own and the other sex invariably and inevitably find out such a woman, and see that her exceptional qualities shall have fair play.

He was undoubtedly and exceedingly handsome, only less so than his cousin Peril. He was tall, and broad, and stalwart, had a manly, active grace in his movements, and a pleasant music in his voice. His dark face had a rich colour mantling beneath the bronze, and his eyes had the glamour and the brightness of the eyes of youth; they had seen no spectres as yet, nor had to out-stare any horrors of care or poverty, or to face any phantom of disgrace. If he were conceited, it was with a generous kind of conceit, with which was not mixed any vanity about looks or personal qualities; it was a kind of glory in his strength and prospects, and a happy certainty that he was going to make a

very good and admirable use of both. Where intellectual points came, he made no pretensions. He bowed himself before Margaret in these matters : on social questions, which she had studied and he had not ; in things relating to art and literature, and even general information, he gave way with a gracious and graceful eagerness which went to her heart, in spite of her better judgment.

Lately she had been forced to see that his thoughts had taken a stride, which had carried them into regions of closer relationship than that of friendship alone. She had had a little thrilling feeling that there was a moment, placed somewhere in the dim future—a moment at which they would some time or other arrive in the course of their travels, and that when it struck she would hear of this change and advance in his views. But she by no means imagined that this moment was anywhere near ; she always pictured it as being leagues away in the distant future. Even when he stood before her and said, "No ; they would not talk of something else," she did not realise that they had already got to it.

"I am tired of hearing you talk about beauty as if it were the supreme thing," he said.

"I am afraid, then, that you will have to listen to a good deal of tiring talk before you grow old."

"When I know that it is nothing of the kind. There is my cousin Peril, for instance. How beautiful she is ! Everyone who meets her in the street turns to look at her—and very annoying it is sometimes. But what is she ? She is not enchanting. She cannot see with your eyes, nor understand with your brain, nor feel with your heart, Margaret."

If it is a triumph for a woman who is past her first youth, and who never possessed beauty, to be ardently praised at the expense of one who is beautiful exceedingly, and in the full prime of youth, then Margaret had such a triumph now ; the thing was, she had no feeling of reality in the matter. She said hastily :

"Hush, please ! You must not go so far as that."

"But I must. I came on purpose to go as far—and further. I suppose people would say, if she stood beside you, that she was as beautiful as a goddess, and that you were—*not* as beautiful as a goddess. But when one knows the minds and the thoughts behind the faces and the eyes ! Perhaps she is like a goddess ; I am sure she is as unreal to me as the most mythical one that ever moved in a pagan Olympus. But you, Margaret," he went on, with a tremble in his voice, "I've thought about you by day and by night—waking and sleeping. Sometimes I've thought

your face was the most beautiful thing about you." (Margaret had cast down her eyes, and sat quite still, listening to him; thinking how much in earnest he was, and wondering why it all felt so unreal to her.) "Sometimes it is just your eyes that haunt me, and sometimes your voice. And then again I think 'No; if one could see her mind, one would get at the real secret of it all.' But as for me, I find you, yourself—your whole self—more beautiful than any one else; and I daresay it is very presumptuous in me, but I shall never be contented, Margaret, unless you will give that self to me—and marry me."

"You don't know what you are saying," she answered in an almost inaudible voice.

Had she not often wondered if there were any man in the world capable of caring for a woman in the sense in which one would care for a gem more than for the casket that held it? It seemed as if here was one who could; and not a *blasé*, life-worn man, who had tried everything and found it dust and ashes, and discovered at last that an help-meet for him would be the most profitable investment he could make; not this, but a bright, young, strong spirit, selecting of his own free choice spiritual rather than carnal things. But the voice of her conscience, or of her judgment, or of doubt—conventional doubt—whichever the reader likes, told her to be on her guard, so she told him he did not know what he was talking about.

Without paying any attention to her words, he went on earnestly, and with a naive eagerness, to recommend himself to her, which both touched and fascinated her:

"I haven't much to offer you yet, except my precious self; but you know all about me, as I stand here before you; and I swear to you that there is nothing in all my life that I would wish to conceal from you—there is not a thing that I fear for you to know. I know there are fellows who marry, and there are whole chapters in their lives which they would rather that any one knew than their wives; but if it were so with me, I'd rather die than ask you to take me, Margaret."

Margaret's lips quivered a little. She was not insensible—and no woman could have been—to such a bright and chivalrous youthful love, to the knowledge that perhaps all womanhood was glorified in one man's heart, simply through her individual influence.

"Do not think I don't know the value of your love," she began rather tremulously.

"Show me that you do then, by saying you will do what I wish," he urged her, taking her hand, and looking at her with eyes that besought, so that she found their pleading most potent.

It was with an immense effort that she at last, as softly as possible, brought forth the words:

"No, Hugh; I can't do that."

"Not at first, perhaps. I quite expected that," was the somewhat disconcerting reply. "But sooner or later, Margaret, you will?"

"I think—never," she answered indistinctly, feeling as if she must burst into tears; feeling such a dreary aching creep into her heart at the idea that he might perhaps take her at her word, and accept her dismissal of him, and go away, and not come back again.

It was what she was going to tell him to do; but when it came to the point, and she thought that he might obey, she cringed in spirit from the process.

"Never—you think. But you will tell me why; a man has a right to ask that," he said, very softly and gently, so that all her good reasons seemed to melt away, and nothing to be left but weakness and the desire to be foolish, and yield.

How was she to do without his bright presence in her life? Then she braced herself up suddenly, and told herself she was a fool and a coward, and a traitor to that larger womanhood which she had set up before her as her hope and her goal in life, and to the consummation of which it was desirable *not* to succumb to the prayers of a boy who had seen nothing of the world, knew no society, and could therefore by no means know his own mind in the true sense of the word. To take him at his word in this, his first ardour, would be cruelty indeed, and she said:

"Yes, Hugh; you have a right to know my reasons, and I daresay they will appear very prosaic and insufficient to you; but you see, we look at things from two very different stand-points. Dear Hugh, you must remember that I am older than you are."

"And therefore wiser, and better able to guide me."

She smiled involuntarily.

"Men may think they want guiding, when they are only very much in love. They are apt to change that opinion afterwards. The earth is theirs and the fulness thereof, and they don't want a woman to keep showing them how to get possession of it."

"You mean, that you think I could *change*," he apostrophised her, with reproach in his voice, and indignation lightening through sorrow in his eyes.

"Never, in your good heart and your high and generous spirit. Those are things which are born with a man or a woman, and which do never change, thank God! But with the mind, and the feelings about particular things it is different, and——"

"Then my mind will grow nearer to yours, and not further from it," he answered triumphantly.

"For that very reason, it will want as a companion something quite different."

"Some more reasons," he said. "You can't expect me to submit to that one, and to say that very likely you are right. I shall probably soon be fickle, and had better not persevere."

She shook her head, smiling a little.

"Another one is, that while you have all life before you, and all your opinions to form, I have long had fixed convictions, and at my age am not likely to alter them, or, for that matter, to be able to alter them. Hear me out," she added, as she saw he was going to speak. "It is one of my very strongest convictions that when a woman marries she ought to study her husband's will and wishes in everything, that she may modify her own ideas as much as possible to suit his—as he should also study to meet her wishes wherever he can. In all the happy marriages I have known, this has been one of the reasons for that happiness. Now—pray forgive me for saying so—I do not choose to begin now to study the will and wish of—well, your will and wish. If I really thought I was indispensable to your happiness, I would—but oh, Hugh, I know I am not. It is not your fault, nor mine; it is how men and women are made: it is so, once for all; and being so, I shall do best for both of us if I keep my life for myself, and leave you to work out yours in freedom."

"You think my will and wish so contemptible?"

"They are not in the least so; but I am resolved that they are, and shall be, nothing in my life, beyond those of a friend. I will not be ruled by them. Both for your sake and my own I am resolved upon this; and you, when you have lived a little longer, will say I was quite right."

"What you say is splendid, as logic and common-sense, Margaret; but I love you, and it doesn't convince me one bit. I won't tease you any more now. I told you I was going away. You will not give me your final answer till after I have returned, will you?"

"If you like, I will, after your return, repeat what I say now. I can't promise you any other answer."

"We will see," said Hugh. "I think differently; and I will tell you why." Margaret had risen, and they stood facing one another, both pale, both determined-looking. "You have given me reasons why you won't have me, which reasons I am bound to respect. But one you have not given me; if you had, it would silence me for ever, and I could not have another word to say."

"Well, what is that?" she asked, in a low voice.

"You have never said that you did not love me," said Hugh, looking her straight in the eyes, with a smile which pierced through every flimsy disguise of hers.

Margaret's lips moved, but no sound issued from them. They would not frame the denial of her love for him. She knew that she did love him—against her will, against her judgment, against her principles and her pride—the pride she took in her freedom, her independence, and her sufficiency unto herself. At that moment humiliation was stronger far than love; she felt ashamed of herself, indignant with her weakness, and with the knowledge that she was unable to look this lad in the eyes and tell him he had no power over her.

"You have never said your heart is not mine," he went on, after a long pause. "And if you did, I should not believe you. How can you refuse to give me what is yours no longer? It isn't kind, Margaret, to play with me like this, as if I should do you a wrong or betray you if you said you loved me. You do; you have nothing but the husk left; the substance is *mine*."

"Go, go!" she said almost inarticulately. "Leave me, Hugh! Go away, I *command* you; unless you want me to hate you!"

"I will go, but I shall see you again after I come home," said Hugh, stooping and kissing first one of her hands, and then the other. And with a final "good-night" he obeyed her behest, and left her alone.

Ministers of the Second Empire.

The recent death of M. Eugène Rouher will have called back to many the memories of those years when this statesman was at the height of his power and when the Empire which he served seemed to be unshakably established. Victor Hugo in his 'Napoléon-le-Petit,' compared the Court of the Second Empire to a crowd of Cossacks dancing on the frozen Neva.

"The ice is as firm under their feet as hard earth—it is covered with frosted mud which glitters and looks like genuine earth—Cossacks may roast oxen on it, and hold revels in full security. But wait till the spring sun shines, and then you will see this semblance of hard earth crack, break up, and be swept away contemptuously by the torrents which it has imprisoned. So will it be with your Imperial System when the Sun of Liberty gleams once more over France."

The Second Empire was not destroyed by the Sun of Liberty, and it was indeed no mere temporary government which Napoleon III. seemed to have founded on the suffrages of eight millions of Frenchmen. After the overthrow of the Empire at Sedan there were plenty of sagacious persons who pretended that they had foreseen this catastrophe all along; but the *plébiscite* of May 1870 had dashed even Léon Gambetta's hopes as to the prospects of a revolution, and at no time between that national vote and the *plébiscite* of 1852, which restored the Imperial Throne, did serious politicians think that Napoleon III. would let himself be deposed like Charles X. or Louis Philippe. Without here reviving a discussion as to the origin of the Second Empire—setting the *coup d'état* aside and avoiding any controversy as to the comparative merits of Imperialism and the system which now supersedes it—we may recall some of the little-known incidents of Napoleon III.'s brilliant reign; while noting the peculiarities of the various Ministers who helped to make that reign what it was.

These Ministers were for the most part men of uncommon ability. The Emperor never had a man of genius amongst his advisers and he never sought one; but none of his Ministers were mediocrities. For the reason that he was the most obedient, the

most industrious and honest, and the least troublesome in every way, Rouher was always the preferred servant; but the Emperor had not the same strong personal affection for him as for Persigny and, in a lesser degree, for Walewski.

These two with General Fleury, who was never a Minister, were the Emperor's *amis de cœur*; his purse was open to them; their power was enormous and subject to no fluctuations, and whatever indiscretions they committed these never led even to a passing estrangement between them and their master, because the Emperor, knowing them intimately and being quite alive to their faults, was not afraid to scold them. De Morny's influence was of a different kind, and has been generally misunderstood and exaggerated abroad. The Emperor disliked this witty, polished, astute and ambitious statesman. It is no secret that De Morny was connected very closely to him by illegitimate blood relationship, and in 1852 just after the *coup d'état*, the future Duke, who was then Minister of the Interior, was so incautious as to boast of this kinship in a speech at a public dinner. It was owing to this that he had to resign. The resignation was generally attributed to the Minister's repugnance for the decree which confiscated the property of the Orleans family; but this was a mere pretext. The truth was that Louis Napoleon deeply resented De Morny's presumption, and marked it for ever afterwards by maintaining a strict punctiliousness of manner even in his most confidential relations with the statesman, who was to do the Empire such good and showy service in many ways. With Persigny and Walewski, on the contrary, the Emperor was on such terms that he addressed them as *Tu*, and Persigny was a man of so passionate and impulsive temper that he sometimes forgot himself to the point of saying *Tu* in return.

Jean Fialin de Persigny was a remarkable character, and but for his temper, would have remained in office throughout the reign which he contributed more than any other man to found. The son of an officer of the First Empire named Fialin, he was born in 1808, enlisted at the age of seventeen in a cavalry regiment, and left the service after six years, with the rank of corporal-major of Hussars. He then became a commercial traveller in the wine trade, and a journalist in his leisure moments. In 1834 he founded at Nantes a Bonapartist newspaper, *L'Occident Français*, which was hardly a success, for only one number of it appeared; but in that number there was an article which fell under the eye of the ex-King Jérôme, and so pleased the latter, that he wrote to compliment the editor, and subsequently gave him a letter of introduction to Prince Louis Napoleon, who was then living

at Arenenberg. The interview that ensued between the bagman and the Pretender was to be very important to both. In the course of his travels over France, with samples of wine in his pockets, Fialin had had many opportunities of remarking what a magic the name of Napoleon still exercised over the peasantry and working classes, and no doubt he gave a great stimulus to the Prince's ambition by assuring him of this; while the Prince on his side was shrewd enough to perceive how useful a clever and voluble commercial traveller might be to him.* After this, Fialin dropped his patronymic, assumed the title of Viscount de Persigny,† and became the indefatigable propagator of Napoleonic legends. In country town hotels, in village wine-shops, in *diligences* and railway trains, the topics on which he harped, when not puffing his wines, were the glory of the First Empire, the grand character and misfortunes of Napoleon, and the promising talents of the great Emperor's nephew. He was a gushing, persuasive talker, cheerful, very brave, and he had a number of those small accomplishments which make a man irresistible at a supper-party or in a drawing-room. He could by putting a finger in his mouth and drawing it sharply out imitate the popping of a cork, and then by drumming on his distended cheek with his middle finger produce the *cluck cluck* of wine being poured out of a bottle. He could play tricks with cards, invent riddles, sing Béranger's songs in a gay tenor voice; he could dance, he was very tender with ladies, and, having an enthusiastic love for poetry, he could recite verses with admirable expression, and sometimes would evince his warmth of heart by crying over what he recited. He got the reputation of being a *charmant farceur*, and in truth his qualities were of the sort that make successful charlatans; but from among those persons who are rather to be cajoled than argued with, the peripatetic Viscount made many friends for his employer. Like all those men, however, who are kindly greeted wherever they go, Persigny over-estimated the number and the value of the supporters whom he recruited, and he very nearly brought Prince Napoleon to complete ruin by instigating him to make his foolish raid upon

* In 1881 M. Gambetta was entertained at a "punch" by an association of commercial travellers at Havre; and in returning thanks for his health, he acknowledged the immense political influence which his hosts wielded, or might wield if they pleased. "You go everywhere," he said, "you see all kinds of men, you are welcome at every *table d'hôte*, you can become the agent of Liberal progress, and diffuse confidence in the Republic."

† He said the title belonged to him by right, and had been in abeyance in his family for two centuries.

Strasburg in 1836. Persigny shared in the dangers of this adventure, but was lucky enough to avoid capture; he was less fortunate in the Boulogne expedition of 1840, and after a conviction for high treason he remained a state prisoner at Doullens and Versailles till 1848. Having thus been the companion of Louis Napoleon's evil days, Persigny had a claim, which the Prince gratefully acknowledged, to serve him when better times came. The ex-bagman threw himself with inconceivable energy into electioneering for the Presidential contest of 1848, and when his master had been appointed ruler of the Republic he went to work with redoubled ardour to weave that series of parliamentary social and Cabinet plots which prepared the *coup d'état*. Louis Napoleon was of procrastinating humour, and he needed a man like Persigny to urge him rapidly onwards through difficulties over which he would have lingered brooding if he had been left alone. With all his wits sharpened by the magnitude of the stake for which he was gambling, Persigny showed throughout the dark game played in the year 1851 a marvellous perspicacity and a splendid nerve. Of all the parties to the *coup d'état*, he was the only one who unreservedly risked his head. The others had made preparations for flight in case of failure; but he would not have cared to live if matters had ended badly.

To him therefore the restoration of the Empire was as the fulfilment of a life's dream, and being an imaginative man he enjoyed it more deeply than any one, except the Emperor himself, who was also a dreamer. In this particular there is a marked contrast to be noted between the character of Persigny and those of De Morny, the sceptic, and Rouher, the cold-headed man of business. De Morny had been brought up in luxury and with the knowledge that he was a Queen's son. He had been an officer of Lancers; he had sat in the Chamber of Deputies from 1842–49, and he had at different times won large sums of money on the Bourse. The Empire did a great deal for him, but not all that he had expected. He wanted to have his royal birth indicated by the title of Duc de Saint-Leu, and when baulked of this hope, aspired to the historic dukedom of Auvergne with the post of Prime Minister, and the portfolio of the Interior. He had to content himself with the meaningless title of Duc de Morny, and the Presidentship of the Corps Législatif, in which it must be owned he made a finer figure than any President has done before or since. De Morny, however, might be called a disappointed man; the mere trappings of office, the gold-laced coat, the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, the style of Excellency, could not give him the same kind of pleasure as they

did to Persigny, who, until 1848, when the President conferred on him a staff appointment in the National Guard, never enjoyed a definite social status. Persigmy had at times been poor and shabby, teased by petty duns, and soured by the indigestions which come from dining in low eating-houses. The Comte de Morny, a member of the Jockey Club, an owner of race-horses, the friend of the Orleans Princes, and a petted guest in the drawing-rooms of the Faubourg St. Germain, as well as in those of the Chaussée d'Antin, had acquired, towards the end of Louis Philippe's reign, a position not far short of that which Count D'Orsay held in England. He was something more than an *arbiter elegantiarum;* he was the devotee of what we may call "good form," a thing which cannot be quite translated either by *bon goût* or *savoir vivre*. A courtly deference to all the usages and prejudices of people in good society, was the first article of his creed, and a smiling contempt for twaddle the second. Through the sedulous practice of his social religion, De Morny had made himself a small band of staunch friends, a troop of admirers, and not a few enemies, who were all powerful and worthy of his steel. It was not possible for small people to dislike such a man; the sparkle of his character dazzled them too much, and blinded them to his faults. Persigny, on the contrary, who had a number of insignificant friends, had also a host of disreputable enemies, and he came to office with countless petty grudges to pay off.

This made all the difference between the conduct of the two men when in power. Persigny was arrogance on the rampage. A few days after he had become Minister of the Interior, he was dining at M. Fould's and fell into conversation with Comte de Nieuwerkerke, Superintendent of the Fine Arts. To the stupefaction of that official he coolly announced that he thought of dispersing the art-treasures of the Louvre among divers museums, as he wanted to convert the Palace into government offices. Nieuwerkerke venturing on a remonstrance, the new Minister exploded into mad invective against art and artists. Then he gave literature a turn, pronounced Homer trash, and hoped a time was coming when schoolboys would no longer be made to waste their days over Greek and Latin. He wound up by declaring it was of more importance to ninety-nine hundredths of the country that the Government should be suitably lodged than "that a few pictures which only gaping tourists went to see should occupy the finest building in the Empire."

Nieuwerkerke ran off to complain to the Princess Mathilde, who communicated his lamentations to the Emperor. "Don't mind

what Persigny says," replied His Majesty, "c'est un bon chien de garde qui fait l'âne par moments."

Persigny in the main was far from stupid or vicious. When he gave his calm consideration to any subject on which he or the Emperor was deeply interested, his judgment was always sound, and his advice in emergencies often disclosed a great breadth of views. He was also a kind-hearted man after a fashion, for his anger could always be disarmed by submission, and a great deal could be got from him by coaxing. But once he had got into power opposition of any kind made him furious; in such moments he would lose all self-control and swear like a trooper. As the Emperor was passionate too, there were occasionally some fearful scenes between the pair. One of the these occurred when Napoleon's engagement to Mdlle. de Montijo was announced. Persigny had made up his mind that the Emperor should marry a Princess of blood royal, so after in vain throwing himself at the Emperor's knees to entreat that the match with Mdlle. de Montijo should be broken off, he stood up suddenly and stormed. A Madame Cornuau, a lady who had known Napoleon III. from childhood, told the late Mr. Nassau Senior how appalling the Emperor looked when roused from his habitual calm into a real fit of wrath. He used to give vent to his feelings by smashing furniture, and this is what he did when Persigny raved at him. De Morny with more shrewdness than his brother duke, was the first to offer his congratulations to the Emperor on his choice of a wife, and he did it so very prettily. "Show the people of Paris her portrait," he said, "beside that of all the princesses in Europe, and ask for a *plébiscite* on it."

Persigny, who was all agog for coercion in affairs literary as well as ecclesiastical and civil, would have had the Emperor dissolve the French Academy as a centre of Orleanist opposition. De Morny, in this as in other matters, gave the advice of a gentleman. His efforts were always directed to making the Government avoid meanness, and do things which would strike not only the popular imagination, but those difficult people, the *habitués* of clubs as being handsome. As President of the Corps Législatif, it became his business to select official candidates for the elections, and he invariably went on the principle of ascertaining who was the most popular man in a constituency, and offering him government support if he would accept it. On the other hand, he held that a prefect should not be connected by residence or family ties with the department which he was sent to rule, but should be a diplomatist, polished in manners, smooth in temper, and not likely to excite himself over local

affairs. On these points he was always in conflict with Persigny, who could brook none but men who were slavish towards himself, and tyrannical consequently towards their own subordinates. After the Republican riots which broke out in the Sologne, in 1852, Persigny said: "We must send a vigorous prefect to these men."

"Yes," answered De Morny; "send them a jolly fellow who will make them laugh."

But perhaps the best evidence of De Morny's fascinating character may be gathered from the recollection of how he died. For nearly two years before his end, he was afflicted with one of the most painful of diseases (tumours in the stomach). His only food was light pastry and milk, and for half an hour after he had eaten, he would lie on a sofa trembling with agony, but without uttering a moan. By degrees he grew so emaciated that the skin on his face was as parchment, and his white, wasted hands looked as small as a child's. Yet notwithstanding the terrible sufferings he endured, he never for a moment lost his outward serenity. He sat with unruffled composure through most trying scenes in the Corps Législatif, and with his usual gentle firmness and epigrammatic wit, moderated the excesses of language, both on the right and the left side of the House. His servants never heard an impatient word from him, and when he was at the point of death, his doctor remarking that it might be possible to make him live for a few weeks longer, he said, with a quiet smile: "*Non, non, je deviendrais trop ennuyeux.*"

Napoleon's secret antipathy towards De Morny was due as much to the latter's *grand-seigneur* ways as to the cause we have already noted. The Emperor himself was always something of a *parvenu*. The first seven years of his life were spent amid the splendours of a Court, but during his boyhood he lived secluded with his mother amid Germans who scarcely regarded the Bonapartes as gentry. He never mixed with the higher classes of foreigners among whom he resided, and knew little of the higher classes of his own countrymen; his long confinement at Ham confirmed him subsequently in his native shyness and gave him the temperament of a scholar rather than of a man of the world. During his stay in England he looked up to the aristocracy with a mixture of admiration, envy, and dislike; the more difficulty he found in getting into their society, the more he detested them and the more he courted them. At the Tuileries he listened eagerly to every suggestion which De Morny offered for conciliating individual members of the nobility or those aristocratic interests which centre round sport, and thus it came

that the "Grand Prix" was founded, that laws against poaching were passed—more stringent than any which the sportsman King Charles X. would have dared to propose—and that the Hunts of Fontainebleau and Compiègne were revived on a grand scale, though the Emperor himself had no taste for hunting. But while doing all that De Morny recommended as being in good form, His Majesty privately thought etiquette irksome, and though he much valued the Legitimist converts whom De Morny allured to his Court—the Mouchys, Montmorencys, Larochejacqueleins, Gramonts and Rohan-Chabots—he was never quite at ease with these gentlemen, of whose *persiflage* he was afraid. It is not easy to get the etiquette of a new Court into working trim, and notwithstanding De Morny's vigilance some serious blunders were occasionally committed: thus in 1856, Pius IX., having agreed to be god-father to the Prince Imperial, sent Cardinal Patrizzi as Legate to represent him. His Eminence, who came with an imposing suite, should have been received at Marseilles by the Grand Chamberlain the Duc de Cambacérès, but this dignitary despatched his Master of the Ceremonies, M. Feuillet de Conches, on the errand. There was some arching of eyebrows among the Corps Diplomatique at this breach of manners, and the Empress, who got very angry about it, held Count Walewski, the Foreign Secretary, responsible. But Walewski made some joke about the matter and the Emperor seems to have joined in the laugh.

Walewski was the personal friend with whom the Emperor always got on the most comfortably; he prided himself on being a natural son of the Great Emperor, whom he certainly much resembled in feature, and his early life had been of the sort which was best calculated to bring him into community of ideas and tastes with his master. Regarding De Morny as a high-class adventurer and Persigny as a Bohemian of the third degree, Walewski occupied a position midway between the two as a Bohemian of the second rank. Born in 1810, he held a commission in the Infantry for a few years, and then devoted himself to literary pursuits; he wrote a few comedies, and was for some time editor of a sprightly weekly journal, the *Messager;* but what contributed most to make him a power in the literary and theatrical world was his long and unconcealed intimacy with Mdlle. Rachel, the tragedian. In the Imperial system, Walewski had his allotted task in winning over distinguished authors and journalists to Bonapartism. While De Morny brought to the Tuileries noblemen with fine-sounding names who were at once rewarded for their homage with senatorships, and high posts in the diplomatic service, Walewski enlisted such adherents

as Ponsard, Sainte-Beuve, Emile Augier, Jules Sandeau, Octave Feuillet, Théophile Gautier, Ernest Renan, Alexandre Dumas the younger, and Edmond About. The first two became Senators; Sandeau and Feuillet were appointed sinecure librarians to the palaces of Compiègne and Fontainebleau respectively; Théophile Gautier condescended to accept the office of dramatic critic to the official *Moniteur* with a handsome salary; and the other eminent *littérateurs* all did service to the Empire if only by abstaining from opposition. The conquest of Edmond About was thought to be a great achievement on Walewski's part, and so it was, for the author of 'Manon' might have become a formidable antagonist to the Empire, if he had not been enticed over to the Court side by a timely hint (never to be realised) that the Emperor would employ his talents in a prefecture.*

It was Walewski who reorganised the *Moniteur*, which instead of being a mere official gazette, became under his direction one of the most readable of French papers. Gautier, as above said, did its dramatic criticisms, About was employed to write its *feuilletons*, Sainte-Beuve contributed to every Monday's issue his incomparable essays of literary criticism, and among the minor writers on the staff were such men as Albéric Second, Maxime Ducamp, and the two Daudets, Ernest and Alphonse, then young. When in 1863, Moïse Millaud founded the *Petit Journal* at one *sou* the copy, which rose at once to such a startling circulation, Walewski lost no time in borrowing his idea, and prevailed upon the Emperor to launch the *Petit Moniteur* at the same price. The competition was not a lawful one, for the *Petit Moniteur* dealt with political matters which it would have been impossible for the *Petit Journal* to do, seeing that political journals had to bear a stamp of six *centimes* per copy, and could not moreover appear without a licence from Government and a deposit of £2000 caution money. The *Petit Moniteur* did bear the six-*centimes* stamp *pro formâ*, and thus appeared to be sold under cost price. It did no little harm to some of the larger journals of the capital, and several of these, though supporting the Government, made serious remonstrances; but financially and even politically Walewski's idea was

* The Emperor saw through M. About in one single interview at Compiègne. Modesty is not this charming author's dominant quality. He talked of "reorganising the administrative system of France," but expressed his willingness to accept some diplomatic post—say that of Minister to Lisbon—until the Emperor should be ready for his reforms. The Emperor answered in vague terms, and M. About remained in a state of expectancy till the Empire fell. In his writings at this period, he refers often to the days of his youth when "J'étais assez bête pour être Républicain!"

a brilliant one, for the *Petit Moniteur's* circulation speedily reached 450,000 copies,* and the proceeds of its sale defrayed all the costs of printing and publishing the larger *Moniteur*. The country was no gainer by this arrangement, for the cost of the big *Moniteur* continued to be charged in the estimates, but presumably the Secret Service Fund was enriched.

Walewski rendered a more doubtful service to the Emperor when he brought all the State subsidised theatres† under the direct control of the Minister of State, who had charge of the Emperor's Household and of the Fine Arts Department. Walewski himself held this post from 1860-63, and its duties almost worried him into neurosis. As the Emperor said in disgust, the fiddlers in the Opera gave more trouble than the Corps Législatif. Every one of their grievances swelled to the importance of a political question; and it was as bad with the ballet-dancers and chorists, who one day struck up the "Marseillaise" during a rehearsal by way of protesting against the Minister's refusal to raise their salaries. Walewski was not the kind of man who could hold out firmly against the blandishments of Opera-singers and actresses, and refuse to perpetrate jobs implored of him by pretty lips; but, on the other hand, he had obstinacy enough to decline giving up the management of the theatres when the Emperor grew weary of the scandals of his too good-natured administration. He preferred to resign, and the first thing that the Emperor did after he had given up his portfolio was to decree the "liberty of theatres." Until then each theatre had been licensed for the performance of one kind of entertainment only, the Gymnase for comedies, the Palais Royal for farces, &c.; but after the decree of 1863 all the playhouses, except those which were subsidised, were left free to bring out what entertainments they pleased. At the same time the houses which drew subventions were emancipated from direct State control.

Walewski was not a very able man nor one of high principle, but he was amiable and a pleasant companion. He was addicted to sulking fits, but he never plagued the Emperor by outbursts of passion like Persigny. The Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs was a post too high for his capacities, but he succeeded to it after the resignation of M. Drouyn de Lhuys in 1855, simply because the Emperor liked him and could manage him. Drouyn de Lhuys was intractable. Walewski had not enough experience of foreign

* All Government officials in town or country were expected to take it in.

† Grand Opéra, Italian Opera, Opéra Comique, Théâtre Lyrique, Théâtre Français, and Odéon.

affairs to shape out a policy of his own, so perforce let himself be guided by his master. In his relations with the Diplomatic Body he was either too free and easy or too supercilious, very seldom compassing exactly the right tone. As the Empress was frequently annoyed by his *sans gêne* in treating with foreign potentates, he once with the Emperor's connivance played off a droll little hoax on Her Majesty. This was in 1858, when the poor Queen of Oude died in Paris. The Empress Eugénie, who felt much sympathy for this victim of Anglo-Indian policy, and who moreover was inclined to make an anti-English demonstration, owing to the attitude which the people of this country had taken up after Orsini's attempt—the Empress persuaded the Emperor to fix a day for receiving the orphan Princes of Oude in State. At the appointed time an extraordinary procession of Hindoos with ginger-bread faces and fantastic garments filed into the Imperial presence and went through the most absurd posturing. The Emperor burst out laughing, upon which the Empress bit her lips with vexation, and said pretty audibly: "I am surprised at you." Then Count Bacciochi, the Emperor's private Chamberlain, gave way to mirth, and was ordered to leave the room with an energetic "*Sortez.*" But now the Oude Princes and Princesses set up together a howl so long and comical that the Emperor and the whole Court, with the exception of the scandalised Empress, were seized again with uncontrollable laughter. While they were still in these convulsions, however, the Hindoos raised their veils and revealed themselves as some of the Empress's own courtiers—Viscount Tascher de la Pagerie, M. Lecocq, Deputy Master of the Ceremonies, &c. The Empress did not take this pleasantry very well at first, but was restored to good humour by-and-by on seeing how heartily the Emperor had enjoyed it.

We have said that De Morny was careful to feel the pulse of the Paris clubs; Walewski was equally so to consult the opinions of the art-studios and literary *cafés*. He was essentially the protector of men of letters. To him it was owing that journalists imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie during the Second Empire were treated with the greatest consideration. Persigny in his brutal vindictiveness would have been for clipping their hair and setting them to make paper-bags, but Walewski never repudiated his own connection with the craft of journalism, while the Emperor on his side was too generous to forget how he had himself been a regular writer for the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais* during his imprisonment at Ham, and that he had found the journalist friends of his early days to be on the whole good fellows. It naturally came to pass, however, that Walewski, through keeping up his friendships with

literary men, artists and comedians, ended by reflecting the views of these classes at Court under the form of Liberal proposals long before any other Minister had thought of doing so. He was the first to suggest that parliamentary government should be gradually restored, and this not so much in the interests of the nation as in that of the dynasty. This he began to do in 1863 when M. Billault, the Minister of State, died, and when it became evident to him that M. Rouher, who succeeded to the latter's post, had not the eloquence which had given Billault such ascendency over the Senate and Corps Législatif.

Auguste Billault's reputation as an orator would have become world-famed if this statesman had not delivered his greatest speeches under the cruel disadvantage of having no reporters to publish them. From 1851 to 1854 he was a deputy; from 1854 to 1859 Home Minister; from 1860 to 1863 Minister of State. But from 1852 to 1860, during which time Billault made his most effective hits as a debater, both Chambers sat with closed doors, and newspapers were prohibited from reporting their proceedings otherwise than by reprinting a summary analysis which appeared every day in the *Moniteur*. In 1860 the debates in the Corps Législatif became public once more, and in the sessions 1861–62 France was enabled to form an idea of the extraordinary developments which Billault's eloquence had taken since the days when he had sat in Louis-Philippe's Parliaments as a supporter of M. Thiers. Billault died prematurely in 1863 at the age of 58. How it would have fared with Imperial politics if he had lived ten years longer there is of course no saying; but Billault was one of those men whose talents flower late, and his power was increasing daily when he died. It is possible that he might have become much more thoroughly Vice-Emperor than M. Rouher ever was.

Billault was a disagreeable, cold-hearted, adroit and resolute little man. His character will be best painted by the account of how he once treated an old friend with whom he quarrelled. In 1848 Billault, who had been a Liberal-Royalist under Louis-Philippe, wanted to come forward as a red Republican for the constituency of Charente. A friend of his, M. Sandon, who held the office of Public Prosecutor, was consulted by him as to the kind of address which he should issue to the electors, and M. Sandon took exception to the extreme Radicalism of Billault's opinions. A correspondence ensued in which Billault defended certain socialist theories point for point, but he ended by toning down his address to suit Sandon's views, and he was not elected. Upon his defeat he wrote warmly to Sandon reproaching the latter for his "pusillanimous advice," and there the intercourse

between the pair ceased for some years. But in 1854, when Billault became Home Minister, his heart misgave him about those letters he had written to Sandon, and sending a friendly note to his former friend he invited him to call at the Home Office. Sandon came and was offered a Prefectship or the Presidency of a Provincial Court of Justice, at his choice, but on condition of his giving up the letters. "No," he said, "you have become an Imperialist, but I have remained a Republican, and I shall keep your letters as security for your conduct towards our party. I shall not harm you unless you try to injure any of my friends; but if you persecute any of us your letters shall be published."

On the night of this conversation Sandon received the visit of two doctors, who came to bring him good news, as they said, about "his sister, the Queen of Spain." M. Sandon showed these gentlemen to the door, and half an hour afterwards he was arrested and taken to the lunatic asylum of Charenton, where he remained nine years. For some time after his incarceration his friends could not make out what had become of him, but when they heard that he had been shut up as a lunatic, they raised an outcry which reached the Emperor's ears. Napoleon III. had a kingly ruthlessness in putting down opposition *en masse*, but his sympathies were easily stirred by cases of individual hardship, and so he sent Prince Napoleon to Charenton to ascertain whether M. Sandon were really mad or not. The director of the asylum exhibited to his Imperial Highness a jibbering idiot who could only grin when spoken to, and said: "This is M. Sandon," upon which the Prince forwarded a report to the Emperor which was published in the *Moniteur*, and in which he said: "I cannot conceive how party malice can go to the length of asserting that M. Sandon is sane." Upon the death of M. Billault, however, the payment for M. Sandon's board and lodging at Charenton ceased, and a new physician having at that time been appointed to the asylum, he at once turned the unproductive patient out of doors. M. Sandon being thus released, published a report of his case; but, broken in health and spirits by his long confinement, he consented to withdraw his narrative from circulation on receiving from the Emperor through Prince Napoleon a pension of 10,000 francs a year, which was paid him until 1870. In the following year he died.

M. Billault was perhaps no worse than some other powerful men who have troublesome private enemies to deal with—indeed there are some ugly stories of other Ministers of the Second Empire having put madhouses to use as *oubliettes*. But M.

Billault's treatment of the unfortunate M. Sandon showed audacity, for this ex-Public Prosecutor was not an insignificant person. M. Rouher would have let him alone; a perfect stolidity, an entire imperviousness to public criticism, were among Rouher's characteristics, and one of the causes which gave him such a hold on the Emperor's favour was this, that he never seemed to care what was said or thought by anybody except his master. We may perhaps conclude from the Sandon affair, that M. Billault, had he lived longer, might have ruined himself by finessing. If he had known Napoleon III. better, he would have been aware that it could not signify a button to His Majesty, whether he, Billault, had been a Radical in 1848, or not; and the Minister's excessive anxiety to keep himself unspotted before the world possibly argued poorly for his chances of remaining on good terms with a sovereign who liked that his servants should look for countenance to him only.

Another point upon which Rouher was so strong lay in his steady attention to the business of his office, and in his never troubling the Emperor about details. Napoleon hated discussion, and "the long faces which stewards bring" when they have pecuniary difficulties to report. Few of the Emperor's biographers have told what an excellent Latin scholar he was, and how he liked to shut himself up in his study with his classics. From the time when he commenced his 'Life of Cæsar,' it grew into a habit with him to do this daily, so that he could hardly be got at to give his signature to the most necessary papers. All the Ministers complained except Rouher, who exhibited that eminently domestic talent of never being in the way, or out of the way. In after-time when Emile Ollivier was chief of the short-lived Ministry which was made to support the responsibilities of the war, the Emperor got to moan for his patient, unobtrusive, always smug and radiant Rouher. Ollivier exasperated him into hourly peevishness by his questions, long-winded exhortations and eternal complaints upon trifles; even if the war had not occurred, Ollivier would not long have remained Minister of an Emperor who liked his throne to be an easy-chair.

We have spoken only of those Ministers who exercised real authority under the Empire, that is, who in the exercise of their authority were subordinate simply to the Emperor himself and not to other Ministers. A little story will introduce them with their several characteristics.

In 1858, at a time of great industrial distress, the Emperor

resolved to go to Lyons and relieve the sick operatives in person. The question arose as to how he should give this relief. Walewski, with his eye to theatrical effect, wanted to have a show of some kind arranged; Persigny, who always remained a corporal-major, wanted the distressed ones to be brought up in squads by the mayors and other authorities, who should certify them to be persons of good character. Billault thought there ought to be two speeches, a long one by himself, a short one by the Emperor.

De Morny urged that the Emperor should ride, attended only by one aide-de-camp, right into the poorest quarter of Lyons, and from two sacks of gold, slung at his saddle-bows, distribute handfuls of gold right and left, and speak cheeringly to the people at the same time. This advice suited the Emperor best; he adopted it and a very imposing sight it was, when, riding through the Croix Rousse, among the Lyonese population of weavers who were supposed to be so revolutionary, he was received everywhere with a storm of cheering, blessings, waving caps and handkerchiefs. He came back, much moved, to the Prefecture; he had no guards but half-a-dozen bare-armed men who walked beside his horse, answering the questions he put them about the state of their trade, while a mob of other workmen, women and children, followed behind crying: "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

When the Emperor returned to Paris it occurred to the prudent M. Rouher, then Minister of Commerce, to ask how much gold His Majesty had distributed in alms. Nobody could tell him. M. Fould, Minister of the Household, said the matter concerned the Finance Minister, but M. Magne said that of course the money must have been drawn from the Civil List. M. Rouher privately sounded M. Bure, Treasurer of the Civil List, who did not know where the money had been drawn from, nor how much had been spent, and M. Wolmer, the cashier, was in just the same state of ignorance. M. Rouher said nothing at the time, but concluding there must be great waste in a household where nobody could tell where the Emperor got his money, nor how much he spent, he went to work inquiring how the Household was managed, and in a few weeks he laid before the Emperor a business-like statement, showing how much was extravagantly wasted every year, and how much might be saved by prudent management. M. Fould was highly indignant at this, and resigned; but M. Rouher did not care for this, and it rather pleased the Emperor to see his Ministers disagree. His Majesty appointed General Rollin to reform the Household on

M. Rouher's plan, and often afterwards alluded with amusement to the disgust which some of the palace officials had shown on learning that M. Rouher's attentive eye had been surveying their little ways. Somebody once called M. Rouher, in the Emperor's hearing, a *rara avis.*

"Oui; un oiseau rare," said the Emperor with a laugh,—"un oiseau qui ne *vole* pas!"

Adam and Eve.

We walked in Eden, lady fair,
I dare not say how long ago;
I praised the glory of your hair,
For you were lovely then, I know.
I loved, and swore you were to me
The only woman in the world,
But, when I bent upon my knee,
Your little lip with laughter curled.
Ah me! my discontented Eve!
Ah! hapless me, a love-sick Adam,
I loved you deeply, I believe,
And yet you scorned me, my dear madam.

You have an Eden, lady, still,
With scores of Adams at your feet,
And doubtless all their hearts you fill,
And doubtless they believe you sweet.
And yet you squeeze my fingers too,
And look with your bewitching eyes,
But what am I to such as you?
You cannot care for such a prize.
No, no, my sweet, my tempting Eve,
I cannot, dare not, be your Adam,
To other lovers let me leave
The apple, if you please, dear madam!

F. E. Weatherly.

Mario.

A STAR has vanished from the horizon—a great, beloved and admired artist has left the world, a man beloved, spoiled, lionised to a degree almost without precedent. So far as it is possible to foresee, there is no probability of any one stepping into his shoes during this century.

Giovanni Battista Matteo, Cavaliere (not Marchese) di Candia, better known under the pseudonym of Mario, the last of the great tenors, succeeded the incomparable and unattained Rubini, and after Mario tenors came who were exorbitantly paid but none that came near him, because the reign of the great artists, for self-evident reasons, is gone.

What are these self-evident reasons? The voices are born just as before. The ambition to attain the acme of gold and glory of course still exists. But the time is passed when, in order to reach that height, singers had to study under masters who kept them for years to their studies, so that they should be models of purity of intonation, of faultless execution, of imperceptible art of respiration, &c. In those days audiences were exacting; but Mario, who had not made those necessary studies, thought that his handsome appearance, and the wonderful *timbre* of his exceptional voice, must conquer the first place. But he had the mortification of hearing, at one of his first performances, the cry: "Pas d'amateurs—Rubini—pas d'amateurs."

Alas! *altri tempi altri costumi*; if there was now an amateur with a voice like Mario's, study or no study, he would be received with open arms everywhere, and dictate his own price. Anyhow, after having been heard at the Académie, or at the "Opéra ——al" as a French journalist a short time ago wittily called it, because it has so frequently changed from Opéra Royal to Impérial and National, that it is only safe to write it down as "Opéra ——al," he saw that his career depended on singing Italian, and to the *Italiens* he went for his perpetual glory. Who was his master? He himself. Who was Madame Adelina Patti's master? Maurice Strakosch, you may say. If so, how is it he never found another pupil who could even reach to Madame Patti's ankle?

Mario had a number of Italian professors here in London who went through his *rôles* with him, to teach him how to sing, because he was not what one would call a musician. One of them, an excellent

professor and formerly a celebrated singer himself, told me, "It is we who learned from him how to sing, not he from us."

To give an idea of Mario and of his exceptional organisation, which adapted itself to anything he had a mind to try, it will be necessary to mention, in a perhaps rather unconnected manner, what some of his most intimate friends have told me, together with what I recollect from my personal experience; we shall thereby arrive at truth and rectify a number of incorrect statements.

The first indication of his desire for a professional career is mentioned in Henry Greville's 'Diary,' October 15th, 1837, p. 116:

"I live a great deal with De Candia, with whom I formed a close acquaintance in London, and saw almost daily, and which, from a similarity of tastes, and perhaps from a great dissimilarity of opinions, and still more from the interest which his unfortunate position excited in me, has quickly ripened into friendship. He has a great deal of talent and facility, particularly for music, having one of the finest voices I ever heard, and a good deal of imagination (of this indeed, too much for his own welfare), and I think he is worthy of a better lot than that which has fallen upon him. As it is, it seems probable that, for want of other means of gaining to himself an independence, he will be obliged to resort to the stage as a profession, and I think it not improbable but that, with study and with his remarkable advantages of looks and voice, he may rise to great eminence in this very thorny career.

"I have endeavoured to persuade him that independence should be his first object, and that notwithstanding all the scruples which a man of birth and education may justly entertain against embracing a profession which is considered as more or less inferiôr to any other, still there is nothing, or there need be nothing, degrading in it, or of which a man to whom no other road of gaining an independence is open, should be ashamed."

The revelation of his great tragic talent dates from the night when, prevented from singing, he was replaced at a moment's notice by Roger, who accepted provided he might sing with Madame Viardot (in the 'Prophet'). This roused Mario to a consciousness of what he could do, and—he did it. It will be seen that Théophile Gautier foresaw that Mario would acquire what at that time he had not yet mastered—dramatic power.

"C'est un rossignol qui chante dans un bosquet. Il excelle à rendre les pensées tendres, l'amour et la mélancolie, le regret de la patrie absente, et tous les sentiments doux de l'âme; ce n'est pas qu'il soit incapable d'énergie et de vigueur,—bien au contraire; mais le caractère de son talent est essentiellement élégiaque. Il a quelque chose de pastoral et de bucolique, et nous rappelle un beau berger grec chantant, en couplets alternés, au pied d'un laurier-rose, Galatée la fugitive."

'Grove's Dictionary,' so correct, so admirably written in many instances, is very unreliable with regard both to Mario and Grisi. It is there stated that Mario, Conte di Candia, was born in 1812—the

greatest singer the present generation has heard; came to Paris in 1837; that he married Madame Grisi here in London, and had three daughters (statements made both in the articles "Grisi" and "Mario"). He was, as I stated before, neither Count nor Marchese. The present generation, strictly speaking, cannot have heard him at all as a great singer, which he was thirty or forty years ago. He was not married to Madame Grisi in London, and he had not only three but six daughters by her; and he was born in 1808 at Cagliari, and not at Genoa; and with all the admiration he so justly excited, he cannot be said to have been the greatest tenor of the century, because his wonderful gifts were not developed by persevering study like the equally wonderful voice of Rubini, who surpassed in this respect every singer before or after him. The absurd story of a famous Italian singer being formed by singing two years the same piece ought certainly never to have been repeated by any serious writer. But the intense, persevering, uninterrupted studies of Rubini and Lablache, the greatest singers of their age, were never made by Mario, who at first was only an amateur, but who subsequently paid attention and, I am bound to say, with the rarest modesty, to any good advice given him by reliable musicians, whether they were composers or performers. When he was on a tour with Sainton, the well-known French violinist, he used to leave the artists' room and stand in a corner on the platform and listen to the 'Faust' fantasia in which Sainton had introduced the tenor air "Salve dimora," which he sang on the violin with the taste and expression of which he has given so many instances, and on one occasion Sainton returning from the platform, and meeting Mario for the third or fourth time outside the artists' room, he asked him: "Qu'est-ce que vous faites ici?" "Je prends une leçon," modestly and most amiably said Mario. This was in 1869, when he literally saw half the world at his feet. The story even goes that a lady whose name I shall not mention, followed him wherever he sang. She never spoke to him, never tried to press herself upon him, thereby disarming even Madame Grisi's jealousy, but she never missed, in whatever part of the world he sang, a single performance unless prevented by illness, which happened only three times in over forty years. I saw the lady in America in 1872, where she had intrepidly followed the idol of her life; and I am not sure but that she will very soon follow him to the last resting-place. Poor lady! Except a mother's love—the purest, the most disinterested and perhaps the only lasting one—there are very few examples of such a persevering admiration, extending over a long lifetime, as this did—never changing, never asking for any privilege, quietly, persistently, but unboundedly adoring!

Mario was the son of very distinguished parents. His father was General di Candia, Governor of Nizza and Novarra. His mother was a Grizoni of the Colonna family. A Duchess di Colonna is the famous sculptor in Rome who was so great a friend of Rossini. She was one of the few ladies who, though six feet high, was so proportionately built, well-made, and graceful, that you willingly forgave her her height. One of his brothers (the eldest), the Marchese di Candia, has been dead some time. Another, his "favourite" brother, Carlo di Candia, also a general in the Italian army, has a son Stefano di Candia, who attended at Mario's funeral, and to whom, after the death of Mario's sister, the little property in Cagliari goes. Of this brother Mario quite recently painted a portrait, enlarged from a miniature, and left it to his elder sister.

Of his early days little is known. He sang as so many voice-gifted Italians do, because he could not do otherwise. Mercadante found him in Concone's school, where he sang bass. "Che basso," said Mercadante, "che basso? È un tenore, e che tenore!" He entered the military service at an early age. He remembered having seen Lord Byron at Nice, who patted him on the cheek, which made a great impression on the boy, not because he was a lord, but because he was told that Byron was the great English poet. I wonder what his impression was when he saw Talleyrand at Paris, the man who warned you always to mistrust your first impression, *car c'est toujours la bonne*. He was easily impressed and always led by his first impulse, so much so that when sometimes they told him at a rehearsal that there was a needy person asking for assistance, he never asked for details, his ever open hand instantly brought forward some silver coins, in many instances even gold, ready to help without ever regretting that he was *exploité*. And that happened often, because unscrupulous persons, especially his own countrymen, knew that to appeal to him was to secure assistance without any questions being asked; and they played upon his readiness in this regard with such skill that once in London he found himself in debt by no less a sum than £1400, for which he had never received anything whatever. The fact was that he liked meddling with different arts and professions; photography for instance, whereby he lost a good deal of money. Subsequently he felt quite satisfied with allowing his friends Caldesi and others to come and photograph his family, which was frequently done at Fulham, in his tastefully arranged house adorned with numerous collections and *objets de vertu*. He was very reckless with regard to money, and when some cameo-cutters asked the loan of something like £400, he never hesitated for a moment, and granted the request by affixing his signature to a bill for that amount. The bill became due and was renewed, until the sum growing little by little, he was

asked to pay £1400. That seemed even to Mario curious, and he sent for an agent of the Opera, a very shrewd business man, who investigated the affair and found that Mario was liable for the original amount of £400 with interest, which he paid, and saved a thousand pounds. Mario had an instinctive horror of writing, even on business matters. One of his daughters, who did the duties of secretary or amanuensis, sometimes asked him to write or to reply to a letter which might occasionally have come from some exalted personage, or on business. "Very well," he used to reply, "*J'écrirai demain.*" He never did.

So far as is known, the real reason of his first leaving Italy and coming to Paris, and trying to sing in public, was an affair *de cœur* something like forty-eight years ago. He happened to be in Genoa, and suddenly determined on leaving for Marseilles, and was taken hence by an Englishman (Admiral Provany), who for his sake delayed the departure of his ship from 9 until 11 o'clock P.M. From Marseilles he went to Paris, rich in hopes and talent, but rather unprovided with ready cash, so that he soon found out that though Paris is a delightful place to live in, dine, drive, dance in, and follow the fashions when you can afford it, you die from starvation there, just as in any dingy bye-street of London, if you cannot pay for your maintenance, or else you have the talent so graphically described by Thackeray, to lead a genteel existence "on nothing," or what Nadaud calls "les existences incomprises." Notwithstanding all the invitations and attentions he received, he was too proud to accept assistance in any shape or form. He became so poor that he had at one time to go to very poor lodgings indeed, where several people slept in the same room. In this room he once suddenly awoke, to find an individual kneeling over him, trying to rob him, and demanding his valuables, seemingly determined to go any length to procure the imagined treasures. "My money?" said Mario. "Take what you can find, but please let me continue my dreams and my sleep." He had literally nothing. But his calmness in only demanding not to have his sleep disturbed did not give him a similar advantage to that obtained by Mr. Fechter, who was attacked in New York one night after a performance. With a large paste pin on, he had gone down near the East River, where at that time a number of roughs were always ready to cut your throat for half a dollar if they were sure to find anything on you. It seems that it was this very paste pin, a theatrical diamond of excellent French imitation, which attracted the thief's attention, and he stopped Fechter and roughly asked what the time was, with the evident intention of seeing whether he could lay hold of a watch. Fechter said he did not know, and ordered him to go his way, whereupon the nigger—a tall, powerful man—laid

hold of him; but Fechter well versed in the *jeu de la savate*, got the man under in no time, when, to the rather unpleasant surprise of Fechter, a big clasp-knife appeared on the scene, and he thought discretion the better part of valour.

"Listen to me, my man," he said; "what is the good of your shedding blood, and getting a hemp cravat for a necktie? I have no money, and no valuables; what do you want?"

"Your pin!" said the man, "and I'll have it if I swing for it."

"You shall," said Fechter, "only I don't care to go home with my scarf open as if I were drunk. If you will let me have your pin you may have mine without any struggle."

"Agreed," said the nigger, and took out a rather tasteful turquoise cameo pin, and put Fechter's diamond (?) into his necktie. I leave the reader to judge what his feelings must have been when next day he came to ascertain the value of his honestly acquired *solitaire*, for which he had given a pin at least worth ten times the price of the stone for which he narrowly escaped becoming a murderer.

I heartily congratulated Fechter on his good bargain, and was not a little amused at his fear that one fine morning he might be summoned before a magistrate by Monsieur le Voleur for having cheated him into an exchange for a valueless pin. I told Mario this story, and he was much interested; and he told me of an adventure which happened to him in Paris, without such violent struggles, and without producing knives, yet more amusing as a mere struggle of cunning.

Mario was standing before Goupil's picture-shop and staring at one of the engravings, as he always took great interest in anything connected with art. Suddenly he felt a finger and even a small hand inserted in a pocket of his coat, when quick as lightning he got hold of that finger and, turning round, saw over his shoulder the face of what appeared to be a very youthful sinner.

"How now," said Mario; "if I break your finger in my pocket, will you cry out and explain how your hand came to be inserted into my pocket?"

"Oh, je suis si humilié!" said the thief.

"And why?" asked Mario. "Is it repentance that makes you feel humiliated, or is it only regret that you were awkward enough to allow yourself to be caught?"

"Nothing but regret at my clumsiness," said the thief, too proud to own repentance.

"Well," said Mario, who eagerly seized at an opportunity generously to forgive, "I'll propose a bargain to you. There is nothing in that pocket but my handkerchief, that is all you would have had for your pains. Will you undertake to begin operations

afresh, and in a manner more worthy of your talents, and lay hold of my handkerchief without my catching you in the act? If you can do so, the handkerchief shall be yours—if not, if I catch you a second time, I'll hand you over to a *sergent de ville.*"

"I accept," said the thief.

"Mind you," said Mario, "be warned, I shall hold my hand on my pocket."

"Bien entendu," said the thief.

"Well, then," said Mario, "the intellectual duel shall begin at once." He put his hand behind his back on his pocket and pretended again to stare at an engraving. Barely a minute had passed and he saw his handkerchief by the side of his face paraded by the thief's hand, while his own hand yet protected his pocket.

"Well," said Mario, "that *was* well done. How did you do it? Mind you, I do not for one moment dispute your claim. The handkerchief is yours, and you have well won it; but I want to know how."

"Oh," said the thief with the assumed modesty of a genius. "Ce n'était pas bien difficile. Monsieur looked at the picture but continually watched me over his shoulder, holding his pocket with the left hand. The difficulty was to get that hand away for ever so short a time, so as to be able to insert my hand in monsieur's pocket."

"Well, but how did you do it?" asked Mario; whereupon the thief produced a small piece of straw.

"Don't humbug me," said Mario, "tell me the truth. You cannot have drawn my handkerchief through that straw?"

"No," said the thief, "I never pretended to do that. What I did was this. Monsieur held his stick in the right hand and his pocket with the left. So with this little straw I very lightly touched monsieur behind the ear. To remedy that tickling sensation monsieur quickly withdrew his hand, and scratched the place. That moment I benefited by. Voilà tout," he added, again assuming his mock modesty.

Mario was so delighted with the witty expedient that, though he never owned it, I am quite sure he gave the man a napoleon or half a napoleon, most assuredly something in acknowledgment of his talents.

It has often been asked how it happened that a man of so recognised a talent, associated as he was with one who herself earned so much money, that at one time of their lives they are said to have made as much as £16,000 to £18,000 in one year—how such a man could have been, near the end of his life, so reduced in circumstances as to require the aid of charity? The reasons are twofold. First, he had very expensive tastes; collecting pictures, sculptures, bric-à brac of all sorts, may lead you through a fortune of any magnitude;

and then, as previously indicated, he was a most willing victim to any of his acquaintances who appealed to his charity or generosity. He paid the debts of a nephew three times (none of those who attended his funeral), not to mention a number of people who, under one pretext or another, came to "borrow" money from him.

"Borrow"! what a fine word for extorting money from anybody! I know a gentleman who, whenever a man comes to "borrow," says this, "You want ten pounds. I want your friendship. I have invariably found that whenever I lend money to a friend, that friend never returns the money, and goes out of my way in the street. By-and-by he avoids me in society, and finally, seeing a perpetual living reproach in me, becomes my enemy. Now I don't mind losing a little money though I won't lose ten pounds, and I will not make you my enemy. Allow me then to arrange matters in this way. I will give you two pounds, happy if this can serve you, and we will never mention this amount again; so you will get something and I shall keep my friend." I verily believe that his proposal very often met with only too ready an acceptance, and he never lost his "friend."

It is not generally known that Mario came here before he ever thought of entering the lyric theatres, that is to say, more than fifty years ago (1832), as a very young and attractive man, son of a nobleman, Lieutenant du Roi à Cagliari, and was received at the Duchess of Cannizaro's, one of the great salons of fashion at that time. There he met all the celebrated people of the time, and there too his splendid though untutored voice created its first sensation. But the difference of the effect produced on an audience in a drawing-room by an amateur, and the effect on the very same people when they sit like judge and jury in the stalls and have the respondent before them on the stage, is great. How often does it happen that a beautiful girl, elegantly dressed, sings with sympathetic voice, amidst a circle of her admirers, in a drawing-room some well-known song, and is immensely admired. Woe to her if from this obliging tribute of friendship she considers herself entitled to face an audience who have paid and want their money's worth of amusement, and who proceed like experienced buyers—turning the voice inside out, examining the stuff and the lining, weighing the execution, probing the intonation; looking, in fact, on the performance as a bargain where one side pays so much, and has a right to receive so much value for it from the other. Think moreover of the difference of singing to friends in a small space where everything is studiously avoided that could displease you, and of coming out in a vast house alone on a large stage, every glass pointed at you to discover any flaw in a fold, in the colour of your face, totally unconcerned whether the examination appears to you rude, severe or embarrass-

ing. You have to undergo it because you are paid for it. I have been told by Mario's daughter that he never got over his nervousness and this unpleasant feeling of being stared at at every step he made. Even Lablache, who counted his successes by the number of times he appeared before the public, said once to a friend: "Gli assi, gli assi mi fanno tremare. (Your footlights make me tremble—I can't help it)." I know that there was a time when Mario refused to sing even in a *salon*. It was in Paris. A very rich old lady, madly fond of music in general, and of Mario in particular, sent him a perfumed little note asking him to sing one little romance at one of her evening receptions. Would he think 1500 francs a sufficient compensation for his trouble? Mario wrote an answer, but he also informed the messenger verbally that he was very sorry, but being engaged he could not accept the invitation.

But to me, who was present on this occasion, he said:

"Is it worth while putting on a dress-coat for the sake of 1500 francs?" (£60).

"Perhaps not for you," I said; "but I know more than one singer who would gladly submit to the sacrifice."

This of course was in later times, when his reputation was already in its zenith—about 1860 or 1861. Anyhow, at the time when he had only enchanted the *habitués* of the *salon* Cannizaro, he left for Paris, and there became aware of the prosaic necessity of making money or of being compelled to do without the absolute necessities of life.

Many of his friends, among others that splendid amateur Prince Belgiojoso, who himself sang with exquisite taste, and with the pure intonation, the true feeling, and the refined gusto of an artist, showed Mario the folly of throwing away such treasures, and *de gaieté de cœur* renounce a career which was sure to bring him everything desirable—glory, money, popularity, and the means of satisfying all his grand tastes for artistic collections, &c. So Mario then tried; he received at once what were then considered large sums for a yet unknown name, and he sang the second tenor part in 'Robert le Diable,' i.e. that of Raimbaut. Then that became clear, which I before stated, that the public sit in severer judgment on an artist than on an amateur, and although his appearance and his voice pleased, his inexperience, his nervousness, and a clear fault of emission with certain vowels prevented his making a success. Singers in general do not take sufficiently into consideration the obstacle that a sound in one language may offer when used in preference to another. Even many years later, when Mario again sang at the French Opera, and there tried one of his great parts—Raoul, in the 'Huguenots'—the difference of the emission, the "displacement" of the voice, singing all

these French "ins" and "ons" instead of the broad open Italian vowels, and even the difference of singing "ee" where you are accustomed to sing "A," and so on, caused him to fail again. It was then stated that the *abonnés*, too difficult to please, and too particular as to pronunciation, found Mario sang with an accent. That was not the reason. Mario had a predilection, caused by the way of bringing out his voice, for certain vowels, and he very often changed his words, taking not the slightest heed whether this pleased the author or not. The French do not care to have at their principal opera-house a tenor, a foreigner, instead of what their Chauvinism demands before all—a Frenchman. With regard to ladies, they are judged in the same severe manner. Madame Tietjens totally failed there, yet at this very moment another Austrian *fait la pluie et le beau temps à l'Opéra*, and the French have to accept her, and do accept her *quoiqu'ils en aient*. It was nevertheless a lucky thing for Mario to have sung at the Opéra, because Monsieur Ravel, then manager of the Théâtre des Italiens (Italian Opera), heard him, and instantly guessing what advantage he might gain from engaging such a handsome young tenor, succeeded in obtaining him for his house.

Mario sang in London for the first time in 'Lucrezia Borgia,' a rather misleading opera, if I may say so, because certain airs in it, for instance "Di pescator ignobile," require only a degree of warmth and expression and are sure to be effective without any great body of voice, as was sufficiently demonstrated some ten years ago when an American manager was deluded into engaging a tenor there and then at £800 a month, whom, when he had heard him in another opera, he would have very much liked to get rid of. In 1840, under the management of Lumley * at Her Majesty's, Mario took the part of Pollio to the Norma of Madame Tosi. But this lady being a very handsome as well as a gifted singer, Madame Grisi feared the attraction might prevent Mario from using all his resources and, *ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut*, they went instead on a provincial tour, under the management of Brizzi, with the result of £6000 to the good.

I have mentioned Madame Grisi, about whom I can only incidentally speak in so far as her life was interwoven with that of Mario. But I may mention that in some notices of her life a number of inaccuracies occur, one of the most important being that the master to whom she was more indebted than to any other, Mariani, is not even mentioned in 'Grove's Dictionary.' She sang very often, indeed, whenever there was an opportunity for inserting an air not appertain-

* Sufficient justice has hardly been done to the enterprise, spirit and judgment of Lumley's management. He was a most accomplished man with literary as well as artistic tastes, a man of penetrating intellect, and of a liberal mind.—Ed.

ing to the opera, a *scena d' entrata* composed by Mariani, "Non stancho di più." Speaking of tuition, we have to enter into a rather interesting question: How much can an intelligent and gifted pupil learn from a master, and how far can a not particularly gifted pupil be made a singer by a master? What a pupil can learn and should learn from a teacher, neither Mario nor Grisi ever learned—that is, to be a musician. What you can get from no master—the splendid voice, the dramatic fire, the expression which captivates the audience—both had given them by nature in such a degree that the master only became an adviser, like any musician who would listen to a singer and give his opinion as to taste or probable effect. The master can direct pupils who are not extraordinarily endowed, how to sustain the voice, can exercise them in acquiring execution, shakes, &c.; but it is a great mistake to suppose that an able professor can enable *any* pupil not only to sing but also to attain fame and glory; and Mario and Patti are certainly the most glorious proofs that you may obtain both by special grace of nature, whereas the great school which flourished a century and more ago—the school to which Farinelli belonged, and the school which had such a combination of great natural gifts and persevering study, and to which the constellation of stars under Rossini and Bellini belonged—seems to remain without an imitator, because the process of preparation is too long.

Mario, the most pliable, amiable man in social life, could stand his ground very firmly against any man when he thought it necessary. The Emperor Nicholas, who admitted no contradiction and was feared for his inflexibility, asked Mario once to cut his beard, for the sake of truth to the character. Mario simply declined to do it, and he added that he would rather leave St. Petersburg than uncover his throat and expose himself to the danger of losing his voice. The Empress, knowing what it meant for any one to oppose the will of the Czar, said to Mario, "Faites-le pour moi;" but Mario replied, "Votre Majesté m'en voudrait de Lui obéir, j'y perdrais ma voix," and he kept his beard. His beard was his only defence, for in winter and summer he walked about with his neck exposed to the air, never wrapping or muffling himself up.

Though Mario earned so much money, he suddenly became so poor that a concert, arranged by Mr. Arthur Chappell, had to be given for him, in which Madame Nilsson and a host of great artists took part. The Villa Salviati—which he had bought from Signor Fenzi, the banker and senator, the same man, I believe, who made a large fortune by the salt monopoly—was embellished and adorned with all kinds of works of art, which if sold in London would have fetched five or six times the amount of money which was realised. But Mario was *insouciance* personified. He strolled along in the streets, while the

train was waiting and a whole troupe of artists anxiously expecting him, examining a piece of amber, a well-smoked pipe, of which he was a great connoisseur, or anything he found to interest him. He never cared about business, and only endeavoured to give others as much pleasure as possible, to let them participate in all his happiness; and no indiscretion, no abuse of his kindness, ever found him disposed to be more cautious.

It would happen frequently that, his dinner-hour being seven o'clock, some friends dropped in half-an-hour, an hour, sometimes two hours later—there was always *table ouverte* for all. After dinner he put down two cases of choice cigars, which on one occasion were totally emptied, some individual with a peculiar forethought providing a little store for the coming week. Mario's attention was drawn to it; all he said was, "Quite right too, the poor devil never smokes a good cigar." He himself smoked incessantly, everywhere, and his servant stood by to receive the burning cigar from his mouth at the moment when Mario went on the stage.

His singing at first suffered from want of art, and though it had always the charm which no study can give, yet it wanted polishing to such an extent that very frequently he sang coarsely in the beginning of any opera, partly too because he did not care to "come out" before the more brilliant development of the opera. There were certain vowels which did not agree with his voice, and it was on this account that he very frequently changed his words, not always perhaps so much to the advantage of the poet as of the singer. I heard him once in the 'Favorita' insert into the romance "Spirto gentil," which he sang so as to be forgiven any change whatever, the words "*crudel perchè tradirmi crudel perchè*," which, notwithstanding all want of common sense, brought down the house. From the refined, distinguished style of his talent, he was the favourite of the aristocratic audiences; whereas Tamberlik, by the power and force of his higher notes, was the man of the masses, who prefer quantity to quality.

His want of exactitude in keeping appointed hours was the object of perpetual anxiety to those who expected him at rehearsals, where he sometimes appeared with the most graceful smile, perfectly unconscious of anything wrong, just as the rehearsal was over; even at the performances he often arrived at the last moment when his entry was already looked for, and he had once to come on without sword or gloves because he had not time to wait another second.

Once he came fully half an hour before his time, to Mlle. Arditi's christening, and never were people more astonished than to see him arrive in good time. But he excused himself, finding that he had mistaken the hour of twelve o'clock for eleven, so that in reality he

was half an hour behind time. He often used to say that he always arrived before his time at the railway station, which was literally true, because having missed the train he intended to catch, he was evidently in excellent time for the one to follow.

When on a tour with Miss Dolby, the famous English contralto, and Sainton (afterwards her husband), he kept them in an agony of suspense because he would never drive with them to the station, but in company of his beloved cigar sauntered along, and when at the very moment of the signal for departure he arrived and they all believed he would remain behind, he used to say with the utmost calm: "Mais il n'y a aucune raison pour s'inquiéter de moi, me voici: je suis toujours là," as if he had never, no never, known what it was to be late. *Flâner* was with him a fine art. Once at Osborne, seeing a tree, a fern, perhaps a butterfly that interested him, he left his carriage and began to wander about until he lost his way, and had no idea how to get back to the house. Fortunately for him he saw at some distance a lady watering some shrubs, and he walked towards her, addressing her in French (he never spoke English, although he understood it). He said: "Seriez-vous assez bonne, Madame, pour m'indiquer les appartements de la Reine?"

"What do you want there?" then said the lady, lifting up her watering can.

"I want the Queen," he said; "I am Signor Mario, and I am ordered to see Her Majesty."

"Well," said the lady, "if it is the Queen you want, *vous voilà arrivé;* I am the Queen!"

He had an enthusiastic admiration for "*la bonne reine*" as he called her, and made a point of seeing the Duchess of Cambridge whenever he had an opportunity. He did so two years ago when he was over here; and I happen to know the painful impression his death caused in very high quarters. In his glorious times the Queen used to go and hear him with Prince Albert, who delighted in his singing, and Mario's life was thereby connected in the mind of the Queen with one of the happiest periods of her life.

To complete his portrait, I must add that, like every great nature, Mario could at times work himself up to a degree of fearful excitement, and being, as his Italian blood would have it, of a jealous disposition, and united to one who had tendencies in the same direction, scenes of extreme violence sometimes resulted, indeed once he overthrew a table and broke everything in the room; and when reasoned with by a friend, locked himself into his room for nearly twenty-four hours, unwilling to admit anybody or listen to any reason.

Madame Grisi, on the other hand, with the constant provocations she had, hot and unreasonable, although *au fond* kind-hearted and good (as

in fact he was too), on one occasion screwed herself up to such despair that she rushed out of the room determined to drown herself. An intimate friend ran after her, but she was very fleet of foot, and he just reached her when she threw away her bonnet and shawl ready to commit the act she had come to perpetrate. Nothing would avail; she would listen to no argument—save one! He asked her to consider what she would look like: how dirty and muddy she would be, drawn out of the water; and so cleverly did he picture how completely her appearance would be spoiled, and so well did he play on the sensitive nerves of the young and handsome *prima donna*, that she returned to the house, and in the evening sang more beautifully than ever. The truth is, that neither she nor he had ever any real reason to doubt each other, being most tenderly attached to each other. But does jealousy ask reason? Any seeming pretext will do; and with hot-blooded organisations, reasoning is waste of time.

Of Mario's six daughters, Mlle. Rita di Candia, born in 1849 in London, lives now at Berlin; Angelina is dead; Cecilia is now Mrs. Pearse, and the very image of her father; Cleria (the amiable Mrs. Vaughan); Maria, who died at Brighton; and Giulia, who died at Paris. His heart was tender and thoughtful for everybody, so much so that once at Covent Garden on entering his *loge* and finding his servant asleep on his sofa, he instantly said, "Oh, don't awake him, he is tired, let him sleep." That, with such a disposition, he was most tenderly attached to his children will surprise nobody. During the tour with Miss Dolby, before mentioned, he suddenly heard that one of his children had been seized with low fever, and instantly he dropped his engagement, left with Mdme. Grisi, nursed his sick child until she was out of all danger, and then making the journey from Plymouth to Cambridge in one day, notwithstanding the fatigue, sang most brilliantly in the evening. It happened during that tour that he had to sing in Mozart's Requiem, a kind of music not exactly of the same type as 'Don Pasquale,' and so Mdme. Grisi, who used not to stand by his side in the ordinary course of the concerts, expressly went over to him to aid and advise him should he fail; she, who was not one shade more of a musician than he was.

Many are the *traits* of his desire to live in peace with others, and to do all he could, so that those he knew should live in peace with each other. It is well known that he did all in his power to recommend and help Tamberlik: it was he who made Salvi go to St. Petersburg, and although it may be said that he had nothing to fear from any rivalry, few indeed are the tenors who would thus employ their influence to help another tenor on.

In a letter to the *Times* it has been stated that his taste for art

was not confined to music. Well, he painted and in particular he had a great share in designing his own costumes. At Fulham he amused himself with carpentering, with photographing; he modelled some figures of a mermaid in red clay, of large size, which he intended to have executed in stone for his grotto at Florence. In this, as in all other respects, he always had his children in view. They had picked up a number of stones at the seaside on different beaches in England. He collected them, had them polished, and built up a charming frame, a cornice, round a looking-glass, with a perfectly novel effect. His love for children was such that during his last years in Rome he often had the children of his servant up in his room and played with them, once severely reproving the mother for slapping her child. "I have children myself," he told her, "and I have never touched them harshly; you must promise me never to do that again." And how lovely his children were! I remember how they came in, about fifteen years ago in Paris, guided by their mother, to Rossini, and sang a trio with their fresh young voices so sweetly, that Rossini, plunging deeply into his pocket, brought out three pieces of ten *sous* (sixpence), and presenting each of the charming singers with one, he said: "Je paie toujours mes artistes. Gardez cela en mémoire de vos premiers appointements."

In the latter years of Mario's life he never emerged from his bedroom before noon. He was, as we all know, employed by the Italian Government to superintend some of the art collections, to which he devoted himself with his old love for pictures, &c. But as to his singing, with one exception he never dreamed of it—he had not even a piano in his room! The exception of which I speak was when the Queen of Italy begged of him to sing her a few notes just to give her an idea of what his voice was like in former times. He then sang her an old favourite romance by Donizetti, "Raggio d' amor parea," an effective piece, written for Cartagenova, a baritone, and giving no idea of the sweet true tenor *timbre* that used to drive the ladies of so many countries quite wild. It amused Mario immensely when he walked in the street and heard his name mentioned, with accompaniment of the nudging of elbows. Once it happened in Piccadilly that a lady sitting in her carriage, saw him pass by, and, as it were unconsciously, exclaimed: "Mario!"

"A votre service, madame," said the chivalrous tenor at once, which of course made the poor lady blush to the roots of her hair, for she had no idea that he had heard her.

A very few years ago he was in London, and recalling the series of his old triumphs and the generation which adored him, he said to one of his daughters:

"I should like to come here again, and live in London, not in the

West End though, but in Bloomsbury all by myself, within easy reach of the British Museum, where I should so much like to go every day."

Those who wish to find the trace of the irresistible singer in the handsome old man with a long white beard, may find all satisfaction in a lovely photograph lately taken of him by Downy of this metropolis, in which they may admire what remained of the visible indication of all that a genial, loveable, enthusiastic organisation, with a most genuine heart, combined in the one designation—Mario.

L. E.

Gracie.

By LADY LINDSAY (*of Balcarres*).

I.

It was a very long, dreary street in which Mrs. Marmaduke Wyvern and her two daughters resided. Of all ugly London streets, in those silent semi-aristocratic regions where there are no shops but only rows and rows of tall two-windowed houses, this street was one of the very ugliest. It consisted for the most part of dingy, colourless houses, though here and there a spasmodic attempt had been made by some enterprising persons to embellish their abodes, or, perhaps it should rather be said, to distinguish them as much as possible from each other. Thus, one house was painted deep chocolate from basement to attic; another, the tint of pale coffee; Mrs. Roderick Jones insisted on venetian red, relieved by black lines, whilst old Major Noddy (who had travelled a great deal in the East) personally superintended the decoration of his front door after the most approved Assyrian style. Little idle boys frequented Major Noddy's door, and whiled away their leisure by following with dirty fingers the queer green and yellow patterns that encircled the columns of the portico, the Major frowning at them from his dining-room window, (which, by-the-bye, was Assyrian also,) and frowning all in vain.

And yet the dreary street, fading at its extreme end into the haze of a gentle autumn evening, was not altogether unpoetical, according to Amelia Wyvern. Amelia had artistic tendencies, and she occasionally made statements that startled her uneducated hearers. Amelia was studying perspective, and, possibly for that very reason, the vanishing-point of the long thoroughfare became interesting to her; possibly, also, because in the square immediately beyond the vanishing-point lived Douglas McHuish, a young man who was a city clerk, and who sometimes accidentally walked up the street on his return from his office at the very hour that Amelia walked down on her way home from the School of Art.

Mrs. Wyvern's residence was one of the unobtrusive houses. Mrs. Wyvern was a lady in reduced circumstances, and conse-

quently she put off the expense of doing up her house as long as possible, just as she postponed many other expensive pleasures. Economy was her one thought, night and day; poor Mrs. Wyvern, there were so few ways left untried in which she could economise! She had sometimes thought of taking in a lodger; but, on reflection, the plan seemed scarcely feasible. She might let her house for a while, certainly; other ladies let their houses, to spend the winter at Cannes, or the summer at Homburg; but travelling or moving of any sort would, after all, involve much additional expense. On the other hand, to remain, and admit a lodger—to keep apartments, in fact—the whole thing sounded too terribly degrading. Mrs. Wyvern felt convinced that, for her girls' sake, she could not entertain such unpractical notions.

It is true that the girls themselves were unused to luxuries. Amelia possessed a black silk gown, the bodice of which could be made to look absolutely like that of an evening dress, by the aid of a white lace *fichu* and a bunch of artificial geraniums, and she was even now preparing to stitch up for herself a tulle ball-gown in preparation of Christmas festivities. But, after all, Amelia cared little for these vanities, and found it no hardship to exist without them; verily, a few tubes of colours and a perfectly new and well-stretched canvas were sights to make her brilliant brown eyes glisten with far more delight than they evinced for the smartest frock that a dressmaker's cunning could devise.

As for Gracie, she, of course, needed no fine clothes.

With regard to food, the Wyverns lived upon so little that it is positively saddening to think how often these poor ladies went to bed hungry. Amelia, whose appetite was, by nature, a healthy one, used sometimes to steal downstairs, barefoot and noiseless, after the others had retired for the night, in order to ransack the dining-room cupboard, and solace herself with a big hunch of dry bread. Then, she crept upstairs again, and softly, on tiptoe, re-entered the room which was hers and her sister's, and where Gracie lay, already fast asleep, her thin face delicately outlined against the white pillow. Occasionally, Gracie made believe to sleep; she knew perfectly well why Amelia had gone downstairs, for indeed Gracie discovered most things, but it pleased her somehow that her sister should not know that she knew. And it was often long hours after Amelia had curled herself up in the sound sleep of youth and a good conscience, before Gracie managed to sigh herself away into a fitful slumber.

Mrs. Wyvern had married somewhat late in life, and when, after four years of happiness, her husband died suddenly, he left her alone in the world, with her two little girls, a London house of

tolerable size, and a hand-to-hand fight with fortune before her, the greater part of his income (being a pension for military services) having ceased at his death.

The widow tried hard to make some addition to her narrow means, but she had been brought up, like most women, to do but little for herself. Until her marriage, she had lived with a rich uncle and aunt, who counted on her perpetual companionship, and who were therefore so annoyed at their prospective loss that they disowned her when she insisted on marrying Colonel Wyvern. The bridegroom's advanced age, the absence of his right arm, and his well-known hasty temper were, according to their views, insurmountable obstacles. But the niece, woman-like, pitied and tended her husband, loved him all the more for his infirmities, reverencing him because of that valiant arm hewn down on the field of battle, and suffering nothing from a temper that always melted before the sunshine of her own gentleness.

Shortly after her wilful marriage, however, both uncle and aunt died, so that, at her husband's death, Mrs. Wyvern found no relations to turn to. Nor, on her husband's side, was there any help forthcoming: the few distant connections she possessed being scattered far and wide over the world, and none of them to be considered rich or powerful.

Mrs. Wyvern endeavoured to turn authoress, but she had scant literary talent. It caused her a week of intense labour and anxiety to indite an article of feeble interest, for which a country journal rewarded her with a few shillings. She then gave her attention to embroidery, and worked a few elaborate cushions and table-covers for a friend, receiving some private remuneration, but by-and-by her eyesight grew weak, and besides, there seemed few advantageous openings for the sale of ladies' work.

She might have sold her house, and retired into a country cottage, but she considered London the best place to live in, both for her own happiness, and for her children's education. Above all, she clung to the house itself; dull and dreary as it might appear, it had been her husband's. Therein, still unaltered, was his morning-room, full of his own old-fashioned things, as his dear hand had placed them—the table at which he sat, the chair in which he loved to read. Mrs. Wyvern came to the conclusion that, by dint of scrupulous economy, she might continue to live in her house, and present to the outer world the same appearance as before. That is the chief thing, after all, for which we each of us plan and struggle; the appearance we present to the world.

The two little girls, partly from the fact that the difference of age between themselves and their mother was greater than is

often the case, partly because that mother lived so much mentally in a past that was everything to her, yet meant nothing to them, relied on one another for companionship, and had grown into girlhood passionately attached to each other. They made but few friends. Their childish friendship had ever been: for Grace, completely bounded by Amelia; for Amelia, almost entirely circled by Grace.

Amelia was strong, Grace was clinging. Amelia was tall and straight and beautiful, Grace was delicate and weakly; indeed, a cripple. At five years old she had met with an accident that injured her for life. Ever after that accident she lay on her back, poor little Grace, and, from her lowly and recumbent position, she viewed life through a lovely spiritual lens of her very own making. There was no envy, no malice, no uncharitableness in her heart; the few figures that moved and had their being in her narrow world were all beautiful and all good, to her thinking; she alone was not sufficiently good. But she meant to try to be. She did not struggle much for this end, however; she loved peacefully, and was loved in return. There was no uneasiness about her nature; being herself the incarnation of tenderness and trust, she confidently took for granted the kindness of every one else.

She was, besides, a delightful companion, full of fun and gentle teasing; a very Philistine, said her sister, but that was because, when Amelia was smitten with her first craze of æstheticism, Gracie flatly refused to have her dressing-gown and bed-quilt trimmed with drab and sage-green instead of the old familiar pink or sky-blue that her childish soul had always loved.

"Why, what would happen to poor mamma if we both of us became artists, Amy?" asked Grace.

"You don't disapprove of my following art as a career, surely, Gracie, do you?" entreated Amelia, who was one of those earnest and serious-minded people who ride their hobbies at all times, both in and out of season.

"If you have thought out any theory about the matter, dear, pray tell me," she added.

"But I have thought out nothing," replied Grace, laughing, "and I never have theories about anything at all. Don't you know me well enough to know that?"

"It is a very responsible thing to be an artist," said Amelia gravely; "one owes a kind of duty to the great and beautiful in everything."

"Perhaps," said Grace.

"I feel," continued Amelia—"I feel as though I had dedicated

express benefit he was occasionally permitted to do, she bade him carry her to the drawing-room window, where she loved to watch the moonlit sky, and the twinkling lamps up and down the street. There, as she lay, a mere feather in his stalwart arms, her thin little neck stretched itself out, and the hectic face leant forward, her eager gaze sweeping the dreary horizon.

Then, finally, as his best reward, she had a way of drooping her head, and looking up with dreamy blue eyes whilst she murmured very softly:

"My brother! my own brother!" and, at these words, the young man's very brow grew red with blushes, and a sweet hopefulness filled his soul.

That was Gracie's way.

Yet this mutual understanding was unavowed; through force of habit, Douglas McHuish had certainly come to be looked upon as Amelia's recognised admirer, but nothing more. Mrs. Wyvern had not the heart to prevent his coming to the house, but she could not encourage him. "Of course he is too poor to dream of marrying," Mrs. Wyvern often said.

"Of course," returned Gracie. "And Amy never wants to marry, you know, mother."

"All the better," replied Mrs. Wyvern; "I don't wish to lose her. But wait till the right man comes."

"And then?" asked Gracie.

"Well, then things will be settled," said Mrs. Wyvern. "You always ask so much, child."

But Gracie pondered whether things were not settled already. She loved Amelia; she loved Douglas. There was that question of money, money, money; always money, thought the girl, sadly. Yet, if Douglas by-and-by became a great lawyer, and Amy a distinguished painter, these money problems must all be easily solved. If only Amelia could earn money *now*, as she was sure to do sooner or later, and as her talent undoubtedly deserved!

II.

Mr. Simpkins' academy of art was by no means planned upon any new or elaborate method. Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins prided themselves rather upon their conservative policy, and spoke patronisingly, if not slightingly, of all more modern institutions than their own. When Mr. Simpkins (the Professor, as he was called) held forth on the subject of art, clad in his velvet dressing-gown and tasselled smoking-cap, one hand firmly planted upon his hip, the other vaguely tracing designs in the empty air, he said a

good word or two for Reynolds, Lawrence, or Gainsborough, and even blandly commented upon Wilkie and a few of his contemporaries, but between these and the painters of the present was a wide gulf fixed. Even Continental artists were rigorously ignored. Sadly, almost tearfully, with an ominous shake of the head, Mr. Simpkins would say:

"Let us go back, my dear friends, let us go back for art."

And yet, for the so-called "old masters" he had little enthusiasm; Raphael was perhaps the only person whose talent he admitted, but this with such reluctance that it is to be feared the Professor's judgments were somewhat narrow. With great decision he opposed any new-fangled arrangements (even for ventilation) in his class-rooms. There was a class for ladies, another for gentlemen; these were held in two dirty little rooms, the smaller and dirtier being granted for the weaker sex. Here it was that Amelia Wyvern plodded and dreamed, her exterior aspect that of a quiet, industrious pupil, her inner soul aflame with eager ecstatic longings for future fame and success.

Poor Amelia was sometimes a little uncertain of the Professor's ability; in this she differed from the rest of the pupils, who worshipped, unquestioningly, at the shrine of his intellect; but there was in Amelia's character an absolute want of reverence. She was, indeed, desperately anxious to attend a school in Gower Street, of which she had heard much, where the teaching was first-rate, and where young men and women worked side by side in a great hall, thereby advancing that great and noble cause of "women's rights" which lay so near to Amelia's heart. But Mrs. Wyvern willed it otherwise, and, therefore, her daughter continued to be one of the Professor's pupils. Punctually every morning Amelia made her appearance in the little dark class-room; daily she stumbled over the skeleton near the door, a poor battered skeleton whereon the students hung their cloaks and hats, and concerning which and the adjacent cupboard many feeble jokes were made. Every morning little Mrs. Simpkins confided to Amelia with renewed zest what care and trouble she (Mrs. Simpkins) had found it necessary to bestow on the costume of next week's elaborately-draped model, and every morning the Professor, rubbing his hands, would reiterate:

"Art, Miss Wyvern, nothing like Art, my dear lady, *nothing like Art!*"

And every morning Amelia smiled and nodded in silent reply.

The Professor shone, somehow, more in theory than in practice. He possessed a purple eye, that is, of course, metaphorically. Everything he painted, from a sunset to a snowdrop, was equally

myself to some unknown deity, put on a robe, registered a vow, bound myself for life, in fact."

"To your profession?"

"Yes, to my profession; you understand, don't you, Gracie?"

"I think so, dear."

"It seems a solemn thing, a privilege to be almost frightened of, to belong to the same profession as Raphael and Titian—a far-off, humble disciple as I am, but still one of the same band. Do you see, Gracie?"

"I see. You are a darling, Amy."

Grace stretched out her thin little hand, on which the blue veins made a clear tracery, and took Amelia's firm ruddy fingers within hers.

"I am *so* glad you are strong, Amy!"

"Strength is necessary for a woman who seeks to make her way in any career," said Amelia, with decision. "And you know, dear, I want to work, both for mother and for you. Only think of all the pretty things I shall be able to get for you, by-and-by! Talking of women, though, there are all sorts of drawbacks put in our way, spokes in the wheel of our advancement. What I should like to prove is that women are certainly far superior to men if they succeed in merely rivalling them, handicapped as the poor females are by so many extra difficulties."

"To whom do you want to prove it, Amy?"

"To the men, of course. They are the ones who need convincing."

"But perhaps they are the very ones who don't wish to be convinced."

"All the more need to convince them against their will. Well, never mind, a time is coming when they *must* be convinced. Deeds, not words, you know. And yet, on second thoughts, I am in doubt whether it is not the women themselves who need to be convinced."

"What, really?"

"They are such limp creatures, Gracie."

"You are not limp, darling, anyway," said the little sister, smiling.

She was lying back on the pillows of her bed, and at the foot sat Amelia, erect and determined, her head thrown up, her eyes flashing, looking like a young war-horse ready for the fray.

Amelia was twenty, but appeared younger: her bright beauty was so thoroughly the beauty of youth and rosy freshness, and there was such abundant life and spirits in her most trifling actions.

"Does Mr. McHuish need convincing?" asked Grace, after a pause.

"I don't know," said Amelia, hurriedly slipping from the bed, and going over to the other side of the room, where she began closely to examine an unfinished sketch of the day before, and to scrub it up and down with a big paint-brush.

Douglas McHuish was a tall, lank young man, with hair that the Miss Wyverns would doubtless have described as "tawny," with light eyelashes closing over his keen eyes, and as many freckles as the stars of heaven showered upon his face and hands. He was much given to reading Carlyle; he seldom smiled; he nodded his head and murmured "Ay," in a deep bass tone, and said but little else. Only, he adored Amelia with the persistency of ten ordinary men.

There was one subject, however, on which the young Scotchman could grow loquacious, and that, as might be expected, was genealogy. To Mrs. Wyvern the subject was as distasteful as it was dull; it denoted a misplaced affection, she argued, on the part of their descendant to go groping around the tombs of the McHuishes, who had left him nothing but an outlandish name and a few thousand freckles a year. Amelia herself was conscious that her thoughts wandered when Douglas held forth on his noble progenitors, her own mind being very strongly set in the direction of modern progress, and thoroughly attuned to the most radical, nay, communistic tendencies of the present day. Grace alone sympathised with the young Scot. She considered his monologues on genealogical topics as a kind of harmless lunacy, and treated him with as much gentleness as any amiable Christian would show to a bear with a sore head.

Mrs. Wyvern was, however, often uneasy with regard to the young man's poverty; that she had been romantically disposed at the time of her own marriage argued nothing in favour of any folly on the part of her daughters: the most consistent people do not think it necessary to carry on till fifty the feelings they boasted of at thirty. Mrs. Wyvern would doubtless have turned a thoroughly cold shoulder on Amelia's unfortunate swain, had it not been that he softened her maternal heart by the sympathetic, almost feminine tenderness he evinced for Grace. His visits helped much to brighten the poor girl's life, and, whilst she undoubtedly liked him, he loved her dearly, this little seventeen-year-old Grace, a budding flower that might never bloom into the fulness of perfection, a sensitive plant that opened out in an instant to the sunshine of kind words.

When McHuish came to spend the evening, as for Grace's

plum-colour, and he naturally insisted that his pupils should scrupulously imitate his method.

In the class were many degrees of excellence. One poor lady never ceased to reproduce in black chalk a huge plaster nose about five inches in length. There was the show pupil, of course, who, it was whispered, had once exhibited at the Dudley Gallery. Sometimes, when Amelia, biting her pencil peacefully as she gazed round the room, first at the tired sultana on her green baize "throne," then at the plum-coloured representations of the said sultana on the boards or canvasses of the students—Amelia, with a long sigh, acknowledged that life is short, and art distressingly, almost absurdly, long.

Yet she worked cheerfully till nearly dusk, then, gathering up her painting materials, she bade farewell to kindly Mrs. Simpkins, sent "all manner of loves" to the baby, and shook hands with the Professor, who, whilst he praised her work, was pretty certain to recommend "a *leetle* more cobalt mixed with crimson lake." And then, dreaming dreams of future glory, her pretty fresh face aglow, Amelia ran downstairs and walked quickly home, only to take out her paintbox once more, and study candlelight effects, with her mother and Gracie for models instead of the weary sultana from Leather Lane.

One late afternoon in November, Mrs. Wyvern and her younger daughter were sitting, as usual, in their somewhat dreary drawing-room, which had been furnished upwards of forty years ago and was consequently as unpicturesque as most apartments of that date. Amelia called this an "impossible" room, and, in her moments of hopefulness as to a happy pecuniary future, was apt to imagine herself pulling down the ugly glazed chintz curtains, tearing up the worn crimson and black carpet, and giving free scope to her advanced æsthetic tendencies! That was a dream, however, destined, like so many of our castles in the air, to adorn the future only, for albeit other folks' tastes might come and go, Mrs. Wyvern's solid but inartistic drawing-room furniture "went on for ever."

Gracie was lying on a sofa, which was distressingly made up of false lines and wrong curves. She was staring at the fire in the highly ornamented steel grate, whilst, opposite to her, sat Mrs. Wyvern, knitting, and conversing, or rather soliloquising, on the inexhaustible subject of butchers' and bakers' bills.

Suddenly, the door opened, and Douglas McHuish was shown in.

"I ventured to bring a few violets for Miss Gracie," quoth the shy young man, proceeding with laborious awkwardness to untie a little blue paper parcel he held. "How are ye to-day, Miss Gracie?"

Miss Gracie was much delighted with the violets, and sat up on her sofa, as she held them in her thin little hands, stroking them, and finally arranging them carefully one by one upon their green leaves in a saucerful of water.

"Is not Miss Amelia home yet?" asked Douglas after a pause.

No, Amelia was not home yet; but Mrs. Wyvern was looking for her speedy return, for the afternoon had already grown both dark and misty.

"But only let that child settle herself comfortably down at her painting," added the mother, half in pride, half in annoyance, "and there's no getting her away again till doomsday."

"She went off to the school at nine this morning," said Grace.

"She'll be a fine painter some day," remarked McHuish, with conviction.

He was sitting in the semi-darkness a few yards from Grace; she could see the outline of his gaunt figure, and his plain earnest features irradiated now and then by fitful gleams of firelight; he, on the other hand, could watch the slender white form stretched out in stillness upon the couch.

"Will I wait to see Miss Amelia?" asked the visitor, with subdued eagerness.

"Oh yes, pray stay and talk to us," replied Mrs. Wyvern; "this has been rather a bad day of neuralgia for Grace. You won't mind the dark, Mr. McHuish; it scarcely seems worth while having the lights as yet."

Thereupon, McHuish contentedly stayed and talked; darkness is an incentive to the conversation of shy folk. Besides, strange to say, he could always talk more freely to Grace and her mother than to his lady-love, bitterly though he lamented his deficiency in that respect.

Presently, Amelia came in.

"Don't you want a lamp?" she asked, laughing, bringing in with her an atmosphere of energy and gaiety, and yet an amount of fresh air that made Grace shiver.

"Oh mother, I can't see a bit!" continued Amelia; "do let us have lights. Why, is that you, Mr. McHuish?"

"Mr. McHuish has been telling us all about the Aurora," said Grace. "It must be so beautiful in the far north, Amy! Please tell Amy about it, Mr. McHuish, won't you?"

"Only how I rode home one night, one winter night," began the Scotchman, confusedly. He had risen from his chair at Amelia's entrance, and now stood twirling his hat slowly round and round in his big bony hands.

"It was across the lonely moors," said Grace.

"And the Aurora was shooting up into the heavens," said McHuish.

"More beautiful than daylight," added Grace enthusiastically. "Only fancy, Amy, what the great rays must be, white, and silver, and rose colour, giving one an idea of some wonderful weird world out far, far beyond the distant hills. I can fancy being lured away and away, towards that magical horizon!"

"Here comes the lamp," said Mrs. Wyvern. "Dear me, how they have spilt the oil again, all over the handle! Doesn't your mother, Mr. McHuish, find that her servants——"

"'Light, light!' I feel like Goethe," interrupted Amelia irrelevantly. "Mamma, I want to show you something. Do look. The Professor says there is an exhibition going to open immediately, somewhere he knows, and he thinks I might really, truly, send this head."

Out from under Amy's cloak came a square brown-paper parcel, and then the young artist, with a little air of modest though conscious merit, held up to view a small oil painting representing the head of an Italian bandit.

"What, really?" asked Mrs. Wyvern, in admiration.

"Oh Amy, not really?" echoed Grace.

"Yes," answered Amelia quietly.

He was a fierce bandit, a very fierce bandit. His head was slightly turned away; still, his eagle glance was fixed threateningly on the beholder; his glance evidently meant much. He was arrayed in a gorgeous costume, worn, probably, by bandits of his province only, and his background was the well-known blue and cloudless sky of the south.

"Well, I must say," remarked Mrs. Wyvern impressively, as she looked around her for the sake of argument—"I must say, Amelia, that you have made very great progress."

"It's a beautiful head," said Grace sympathetically; "oh, you dear, clever Amy, I must give you a kiss; I never saw such a fierce-looking bandit!"

"I should think not," returned Amy. "The Professor wanted us particularly to catch that expression, as the model actually did commit a murder once long ago in Corsica."

"Of course one must not praise one's own child," said Mrs. Wyvern, "but I cannot help thinking there are very few young artists who could beat that head. And I don't know about 'young' either."

"There is one little thing that troubles me," said Amelia in a hesitating voice, "that is, you see, mamma, the high light on the

bandit's nose. What do *you* think of the high light, Mr. McHuish!"

"I'm no much of a painter mysel," replied the person interrogated, who lapsed into a northern dialect whenever he became nervous. "The nose is no that bad, to my thinking; it's the lad's complexion that's terrible blue, surely."

"Why, the Professor said it was not blue enough!" exclaimed Amelia.

"Oh, Mr. McHuish, you don't really think it blue?" asked Grace reproachfully.

"I—I——" stammered the young man.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Wyvern, with some severity, "perhaps that Mr. McHuish has not sufficiently considered the reflections from the southern sky."

Amelia said no more. Possibly, she inwardly felt that, like the Archbishop in 'Gil Blas,' she desired for her critic "toutes sortes de prospérités, avec un peu plus de goût," whilst the unhappy offender, stumbling over his sentences, sought, by the most indiscriminating praise, to reinstate himself in his former position of trust.

Days passed; the bandit, carefully framed and labelled, was sent to the exhibition, and in due time, as Amelia received no notice to the contrary, she became tremblingly, hopefully, delightedly aware that her picture was accepted and hung.

During these anxious days, she was very eagerly expectant, and yet afraid, to hear the postman's knock; she knew not what news he might bring. No news is good news, doubtless, as Grace oftentimes asserted, and yet such silence was trying to bear.

Amelia worked somewhat fitfully at the Professor's. She found herself in high favour with her fellow-students; they evidently viewed her with much increased respect. On one occasion the poor lady who was struggling with the large chalk nose actually went on all-fours to look for a piece of india-rubber which Amelia had dropped! Mrs. Simpkins addressed her as "dear child;" the Professor talked lengthily to her of the possible regeneration of art, a subject he reserved for a very choice few amongst his pupils, deeming, doubtless, that there were but few of them destined to take a really active part in such regeneration.

But Amelia could not work as of yore; she painted out to-day what she had painted in yesterday; she was certainly demoralised. Her small capabilities of the present jarred in her mind with the wide destinies she contemplated for the future. Of course the brigand was the doorway through which she was to wend her steps towards these destinies, and yet, as she worked,

she was conscious of some uneasiness concerning the finite nature of her own art. Certainly, at home, as she sat beside Gracie's couch, at rest from palette or canvas, she held forth garrulously as to her future aims and present success, without any disturbing emotion. Somehow, it was always so easy to talk to Gracie! Nothing seemed too great, nothing too small, for her facile comprehension and universal sympathy.

"Why can't women become Royal Academicians!" Amelia would exclaim wrathfully, whilst her sister listened sorrowfully. "What an unjust, miserable nineteenth century we live in, to be sure," continued Amelia, forgetful of her doctrines of progress; "only think of Mary Moser and Angelica Kauffmann!"

"Were they Academicians?" asked Grace, who was still strangely ignorant on the subject.

"Why, of course."

And thereupon Gracie from her full loving heart protested that Amelia was surely intended to become the female art-pioneer of this present generation, and that the most obtuse public could not possibly remain blind to her remarkable merit.

It may be held that such indiscriminate praise was unwholesome for Amelia, but Grace did not reason thereon; she was not going to set up as a moral blister or scourge for the chastening of her sister. If Grace Wyvern loved the universe generally, how much more must she not idolise those objects of affection which were encircled by the narrow boundary of home?

Perchance she was not altogether wrong. For, surely, when, tired and grey-headed, we pause in the journey of life, and look back upon those sweet foolish fondnesses with which in early days our dear ones encouraged our unripe efforts, we smile to recall the efforts, and sigh to remember the fond words, conscious that since then the outer world's more truthful judgment (together with our own painful conviction) has sufficiently well settled that little matter of our youthful vanity. There are not many boys at school, I imagine, who condemn the mother's tenderness which scarcely prepared them for a life of hardship.

Haply, even whilst Gracie encouraged her sister by extreme adulation, Amelia grew humble, and felt her own faults all the more keenly.

"Don't dear, don't," she entreated. "You see me as I want to be, not as I am."

"It is because I know you so well," returned Gracie simply. "I see you now already as you are going to be. It is all in you, Amy, though other people may not see it yet as I do, and I suppose it has been in you ever since you were born. You need

to learn what is technical, perhaps, but an artist is an artist always."

"I sometimes think it is you who are the real artist," sighed Amelia; "you feel so much."

"Oh yes, I feel," said Gracie, somewhat vaguely, gazing at Amelia with lustrous eyes.

As for Grace's own prospects, they never troubled her. Even Mrs. Wyvern, who doated on her invalid child, never alluded to the child's future. Perchance she dreaded the future—or perchance to her it seemed that the little white form must needs continue to lie stretched before her eyes on the couch by the fireside, though years rolled on, though Amelia should go forth into the world to her triumph, and whilst she herself sat knitting with the deepening shadows of age gathering about her. Yes, Gracie was to be there, always; Gracie, who was tended and petted, carried from room to room and propped up on pillows; Gracie, for whom the cook's slender knowledge was daily heavily taxed; Gracie, for whom new books and pretty needlework were constantly provided—Gracie, the pivot on which the household really turned, the homely beacon by which they all directed their way. All, Douglas McHuish last, not least.

Because he was not constantly present in the house, however, Douglas noticed more readily than the others how shrunken the slender figure had become, how wan and white the delicate features had grown. It filled his heart with pain to mark the change, a gradual, steady change, he thought. How he should miss little Gracie! He had never had a sister; it was a tender joy to him to think of Gracie as such. It was no disloyalty to Amelia that he loved Gracie so deeply, for indeed Amelia possessed an additional attraction in his eyes in that Gracie was her sister, and therefore, thought Douglas, one day . . .

However, argued he, Grace was his sister already; there was really no need to look for more. She understood him as none surely but a sister could understand. When he was earnest, she was serious; when he was perturbed, she grew sympathetic; when he was shy and ill at ease, she renewed his confidence. By some inexplicable reticence, he had never actually talked to her of his matrimonial intentions; he guessed nevertheless that Grace would stand him in good stead with her sister, and speak well of him, nay, plead his cause, if need there were. He had even occasionally wished, big, brave man though he was, that he might propose to Amelia whilst Gracie lay close by. She would doubtless, without speaking, give him that courage of words which he so strangely lacked; he could augur from the look

in her eyes whether he spoke well or ill, and what effect he was likely to have on Amelia.

Douglas was able to read Gracie's countenance better than that of his lady-love; in many ways the younger girl appeared to him the elder of the two. Because Amelia was so joyous, so full of life, so taken up with art and theories of all sorts, so busy, so energetic, he was a little uncertain how to break the ice, how to demand her attention, and bid her listen to what was tumultuously throbbing and aching within his heart—tumultuously throbbing, yet softly murmuring also. For, if a man's heart be ever softer than a woman's, Douglas McHuish, rough and ungainly though he appeared, possessed a more gentle organ than did Amelia Wyvern.

Once he had tried to begin upon the dreaded subject.

"Don't keep me too long just now," said Amelia, smiling, and looking him through and through with her wide-open brown eyes. "You know, Mr. McHuish, men never expect women to have any *real* business, do they?"

"But this," stammered McHuish,—"this is a question of vital importance. . . A poor fellow——"

"Oh, here are two shillings," cried Amelia cordially; "why should you mind asking me? *Of course* I should like to help any one you are interested in! And I daresay mamma will help, too. But I really must go now; you won't mind, for my brushes will certainly spoil if I don't go and clean them this very minute!"

III.

Amelia Wyvern on "varnishing day" was a sight for the gods to see. Stepping out, daintily attired, her bright face positively brilliant with excitement, she carried in her well-gloved hands the neatest of colour-boxes, and the newest of paint-brushes, as well as a tenderly-treasured printed document which invited her to come and view her own picture in the —— Street Exhibition.

She crossed the threshold of that sacred spot somewhat nervously, afraid of being stopped or turned away, yet trying to appear as self-possessed as though the best part of her twenty years had consisted of "varnishing days."

When she entered the gallery, which was not a large one, she looked eagerly round, but could not for some time discover the bandit. There were about a dozen people in the room, women as well as men, strolling or standing about, mostly in knots of twos and threes, and all with a more or less chilled and dejected aspect.

A couple of kindly workmen were bringing a long ladder for an unfortunate youth who wished to touch up his picture, hung as it was so high that nothing of it could be seen but the lower portion of a pair of highly-glazed wellington boots. Following the direction of the artist's upturned eyes, however, Amelia suddenly discerned her picture, hung on the top line, where it seemed so small as to resemble a richly-coloured postage-stamp.

Alas, poor bandit! Alas, poor Amelia! The bandit frowned and glared in puny effort from his altitude, whilst Amelia turned positively faint from disappointment, and two big tears forced themselves into her eyes.

She bit her lip hard, to prevent the tears from running down her cheeks, and stole her hand furtively into her pocket to find her handkerchief. The painter of the boots had meanwhile commenced to climb his ladder, and, looking round somewhat suddenly, he encountered the pretty sorrowful face beneath him.

"Is your picture up here also?" he asked kindly. "Shall I varnish it for you?"

"Oh, thank you, thank you," stammered Amelia. Alas! the words of sympathy made the tremulous tears overflow.

"You'll get used to it," said the painter gently; "anyhow, you've got your name in the catalogue. And at a little distance the picture looks uncommonly well, doesn't it, now? Besides, it's often those at the top that sell the soonest, you know."

Poor Amelia, gazing from afar at the well-known bluish features of her bandit, wondered if her new friend's pictures were always hung so high that he had grown used to speak on the subject with happy confidence; then, after thanking him, she wended her way slowly and sadly home.

She felt bound to appear as cheerful as possible, however, in her sister's presence, for Grace was waiting, in a perfect fever of anxiety, to hear the details of so eventful a morning. Therefore, it came to pass that, a few days later, when Amelia and her mother sallied forth together to see the pictures, even Mrs. Wyvern was scarcely prepared for the shock of seeing the bandit so unduly elevated. There were no very well-known names among the painters represented in the catalogue; consequently, Mrs. Wyvern took a high stand, and was more angry than aggrieved.

"We must be prepared for a little jealousy, my child," she added consolingly, after a burst of wrathful words; "I daresay it is well known that you are young and pretty."

In which speech it may be thought that Mrs. Wyvern was somewhat hard upon the hangers, who were not, after all, of the feminine sex!

But whether her comparative success (or comparative failure) had been good for Amelia or not, it is certain that she went back to her work at the Professor's with improved industry. She worked early and late; she never seemed to tire. Her eager enthusiasm had mellowed and given place to a patient, even-tempered love of her profession; once, when Grace spoke to her of the future, she answered gently:

"Oh, Gracie, I seem hateful to myself for having been so silly as to think I should ever do anything great."

"But you will, you must, Amy."

"Must I? I don't know, I scarcely dare to hope. Oh, it is all as far off as that Aurora that you and Douglas were talking of, one afternoon; do you remember, Gracie?"

"*Douglas?* Did you call him Douglas?" asked Grace in a whisper.

"Yes—no," answered Amelia, reddening. "I think of him as Douglas, sometimes."

"Amy!"

"Well."

"Come and sit beside me, will you, dear? There, give me your blessed old head close, and let me stroke it. Listen. If ever you think about me, by-and-by, later on——"

"Oh Gracie, don't."

"When you think of me," repeated Grace, firmly, "think dear, how glad I was that you thought of him as Douglas, your Douglas. Will you, Amy?"

"Yes," answered Amelia, who was crying. And thereupon she caught hold of her little sister's hand, and squeezed it violently, and then, without a word, she got up and ran out of the room.

A few days later, Grace called her mother to come and sit beside her.

The two were alone in the room. It was twilight, the hour the sick girl loved:

> "Between the dark and the daylight,
> When the night is beginning to lower."

Grace thought it should not only be "the children's hour," as Longfellow meant it to be, but an hour of healing balm for all the sick and sorry, a time when our spirits loose themselves from their trammels and grow more spiritual—an hour, above all, when we seem nearer to those we love, and more able to say what at other times it is hard to say.

Outside, in the dreary fog-laden street, the gas lamps were

being lighted, one by one, and occasionally the rolling sound of carriage-wheels grew, and passed, and died away upon the ear.

"Mother, come and speak to me," said Grace; "I want you to do something for me."

There was a rising sob in Mrs. Wyvern's throat as she obeyed the summons, for she had been wrapt in sorrowful meditation; nevertheless, sitting down silently, she took within her own the fragile fingers of Grace's outstretched hand.

They were very fragile fingers. Mrs. Wyvern could not but recollect with a fresh pain at her heart what Douglas McHuish had told her yesterday, after he had held the child for awhile in his arms at the window. Yes, he said that the light weight had grown yet lighter; he thought it his duty to tell that, he said, and ever since he had spoken thus a sense of helpless misery had gathered tightly round Mrs. Wyvern's heart. For she knew, alas! of how little use to Grace were the medicines prescribed for her; she knew that hers was not any special malady . . .

"Will you do something for me, mamma?"

"What is it, Gracie?"

"Something that I want, very very much. Will you promise to do it, mamma?"

"Without knowing what it is?"

Mrs. Wyvern gazed at the eager little face, visibly eager even in the twilight shadows; tears came into her eyes; somehow she could not keep them back.

"Oh, promise, mother, promise!"

"Very well, I promise, child."

"And you will never, never tell."

"No, I will not tell; not if you do not wish it."

"I have saved four pounds of my own," said Grace hurriedly—"my very own—my pocket-money. And Amy has put five guineas on the bandit."

"Well?"

"I want you to buy the bandit. Do you understand, mother?"

"You—want—me—to—buy—the—bandit?" repeated Mrs. Wyvern slowly.

"Yes, yes! Oh! you said you would do it! You must; you promised. And you promised that you would never tell."

"I will not tell," said Mrs. Wyvern gently. "But, Gracie, I scarcely see——"

"Don't you see," asked the girl feverishly—"don't you see that if Amy sells this picture, her first picture, she will be quite tremendously encouraged? The picture will have a red star on it—she told me that—and all the world will know that it is sold, and

what a great painter she is going to be, and everybody will want to buy her pictures." Grace stopped, exhausted, and drew a long breath.

"My little Grace," said Mrs. Wyvern huskily.

"I know so exactly how it will be," went on the child; "I have been thinking it all over, oh for so long! It is the first picture that makes the whole difference, and, when once anybody has got a start, success follows easily enough. Poor Amy! she has nobody to help her on, only you and me, mother dear. But, above all, you will not tell; promise again, promise."

"Yes, I promise."

"I am afraid you must advance me the one pound, five shillings. I will pay you back regularly, all my pocket-money, week by week."

"Will you, dear?"

Mrs. Wyvern spoke in a strange voice; fortunately, the room was growing so dark that Gracie could not see her face, nor see the tears that rained and rained down so quickly that Mrs. Wyvern did not even attempt to dry them.

"I would have waited till I had saved all the money," said Gracie, after a pause, "but I thought it was better not to wait."

"Why not?"

"Oh, because—— Well, the exhibition might shut soon, perhaps. But you will go to-morrow, mamma?"

"To-morrow?" repeated poor Mrs. Wyvern vaguely.

"You must go and arrange with the secretary, and have the bandit sent by-and-by to some other address, to another name, not yours, of course. We will think it all out together, won't we, dear?"

There was a long pause, and then Gracie spoke again, very softly.

"Mother!"

"Well, my child."

"If—if,—well, suppose if I were to die, Amy would be just a very little bit richer, wouldn't she?"

"Just a little, darling."

Grace answered nothing; she only raised her mother's hand to her own loving lips, and kissed it, with a long, long kiss. Presently she whispered:

"That would help Amy—and Douglas." But she whispered the words so softly it is doubtful whether Mrs. Wyvern heard them; at all events, she kept silence.

It happened that one day soon after this conversation Amelia received a letter containing the announcement of the sale of her first picture. Her joy was unbounded; she jumped up, and danced, and ran about the room like a child in high delight.

Douglas McHuish, who was present, (he had looked in for a moment only, of course,) sat open-mouthed and amazed, watching his lady-love's evident symptoms of lunacy, and wondering whether any effort on his part might ever succeed in calling forth such expressions of joy from her.

Mrs. Wyvern was somewhat silent and constrained, but Gracie, the little traitress, gave vent to many exclamations of pleasure and astonishment.

"Hurrah, Amy!" she cried; "who would have thought it? And yet did we not all of us prophesy this long ago? Why don't you come and shake hands with her, Mr. McHuish, and tell her how awfully glad you are?"

But Amelia dragged her mother into the next room.

"Shut the door," she whispered excitedly; "oh, now listen, listen, mamma. I never had so much money of my own before. It *is* my very own, isn't it? I earned it, you know, and now you must tell me what I can get for Gracie; I want to spend it on her. Poor little Gracie! She has so few pleasures! And she has been so good and kind, if you only knew! She has never ceased to be encouraging about my work, and I don't think she ever remembers one little bit that she—that she isn't as strong as we are."

Mrs. Wyvern, bound by her promises, could only nod her head and say constrainedly, "Yes, my dear, yes," but the next morning she accompanied Amy on a long and fatiguing quest in search of something undefined—a present for Gracie.

Up and down Piccadilly, past Regent Street, beyond Oxford Street, back into Bond Street, walked that weary pair; then into unknown streets and places, where, finally, a tame and beautiful piping bulfinch, a marvellously trained and trilling bird, a very Mario amongst bulfinches, was fixed upon, housed in a new cage, and carried home in Amelia's arms, as she and her mother jolted homewards in a four-wheeled cab.

The Professor saw nothing of his pupil that day; bulfinch-worship occupied the whole of the afternoon. And from henceforth, Bully's cage was placed close beside the sick girl's couch, and Bully became her inseparable companion. She knew, though Amy did not know, whose savings had gone to purchase him; but she knew also whose affection had brought him thither. Her heart was full of love and gratitude as she lay, her blue eyes more lovely than ever in their tenderness, watching the tiny songster, who bent his shiny black head on one side, and trilled forth the melody of the sweet Thuringian folk-song, telling of "Treue Liebe":

"Ach, wie ist 's möglich dann,
Dass ich dich lassen kann?
Hab' dich von Herzen lieb, das glaube mir!
Du hast die Seele mein;
So ganz genommen ein,
Dass ich kein' andre lieb'
Als dich allein!"

But Grace herself was about to leave him. Neither "true love," nor care, nor songs of birds could keep her. She was on her way to a land of heavenly sweetness and song, beyond the light of moon and stars, beyond the rays of the Aurora Borealis, the poetry of which had taken such strange hold of her youthful imagination.

She spoke of it to Douglas McHuish once, when she happened to be alone with him.

"You and Amy must go north some day," she said, "and be happy, quite happy together, and when you journey across the moors, and you see before you, far away, those beautiful shining rays, you will think of me somehow with the Aurora, won't you, Douglas?"

"My little sister," answered Douglas tremulously, as he clasped her hand in his, and kissed it reverentially.

* * * * * *

It was her beloved hour of twilight when she died; she passed away with scarce a sigh. There was no more sorrow nor sadness in her death than there had been in her bright and unselfish life. She bade Douglas lift her in his arms, and carry her to the window. It was during a heavy snowstorm; large flakes of snow were falling rapidly; the street, the passers-by, the roofs of the houses, the very world seemed white, spite of the deepening darkness.

"Amy," called the child, "come and see the snow. It must be beautiful in the north. Mother, are you there? Ah, listen to Bully! Mother," and she drew her mother down, close to her own little chill face. "Mother, remember—you will never tell."

Then she dropped back in the arms of her brother Douglas. That was the end.

* * * * * *

By-and-by, after several sorrowful months had gone past, Grace's words came true. Amelia married Douglas McHuish, and, travelling with him to the far north, visited the home of his fathers and wandered with him, hand in hand, across the purple moors. Later on, they returned to London, to settle down, each to work and bring grist to the mill, for Amelia gradually learnt to make her bandits less fierce in aspect, and less blue in complexion.

Meanwhile, during the young folks' absence, in her house in the dreary London street Mrs. Wyvern lived her lonely life. And when her pet bulfinch piped to her his plaintive Thuringian love-song:

"Ach, wie ist 's möglich dann,
Dass ich dich lassen kann?"

Mrs. Wyvern laid aside her knitting, and folded her hands, and listened, whilst burning tears coursed slowly down her cheeks. But never, at any time, did she reveal that tender little secret of Gracie's, that she had promised not to tell.

"Together."

We were girl and boy together,
  Gathering wild flowers day by day,
  Laughing and singing the hours away,
In the sunny summer weather;
And we played to-day and to-morrow
  Under the yew in the churchyard green,
  He was my hero, I was his queen,
We knew not a thought of sorrow.

And the years went onward flying,
  Till one bright day when the spring was born,
  And the scented may awoke with the morn,
To the church we two were hieing;
And he vowed we never should sever,
  And I was blushing, all white and red,
  So he held my hand to still my dread,
And we were made one for ever.

And the old yew-tree is sighing,
  As I kneel by a grassy green mound,
  And the wild flowers blossom around,
Where my lover, my life, is lying;
But a perfect peace shall be given,
  When my body is sleeping at last
  In the silent churchyard of the past,
And our souls find rest in heaven.

William Boosey.

The New School of American Fiction.

THERE has lately sprung up on the other side of the Atlantic a remarkable growth of novel-literature; intensely modern, intensely self-conscious, but full of cleverness withal, and quite unique in flavour. It has many admirers, many imitators, and its prophets and elders assure us, that not only is it the fiction of the future, but the only fiction, indeed, which can be *warranted genuine*.

"The art of fiction," says Mr. Howells, in his startling little article on Mr. Henry James, "has in fact become a finer art in our day than it was with Dickens and Thackeray, and we could not now suffer the confidential attitude of the latter, nor the mannerism of the former, any more than we could endure the prolixity of Richardson, or the coarseness of Fielding. These great men are of the past, they and their methods and interests. The new school derives from Hawthorne and George Eliot rather than from any other, but it studies human nature much more in its wonted aspects, and finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter, but not really less vital motives."

Such a flourish of trumpets, coming as it does from one of the leaders of the new school, is in itself of no little significance. It tells us at once what value the artist has attached to his work, where he has aimed, and by what standard he wishes to be judged. We propose to examine the claims of the writers who, they tell us, have raised fiction to such a pitch of artistic perfection.

The names of Mr. Henry James, junior, and Mr. W. D. Howells, naturally occur to us in considering the question. The author of 'That Lass o' Lowrie's' by her story 'Through one Administration,' and Mr. Crawfurd by his 'Dr. Claudius' and 'Mr. Isaacs,' may be considered to have enrolled themselves members of the new school of fiction. The work of the vast crowd of lesser disciples is to be met throughout the American literature of to-day, and is, in its own way, exceedingly instructive.

In an article published some time ago in the 'XIXth Century' Mr. Ruskin complained that the persons of George Eliot's novels suggested nothing so much as the sweepings of a Pentonville omnibus. What would he have said of a literature which, if the

expression be allowed us, occupies itself so largely with the Pentonville omnibus of the soul?

Nothing is too trivial, too sordid, or too far-fetched to engage the attention of these "fine art" writers. "The new school finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not really less vital motives," says Mr. Howells, who, no doubt, is proud of the fact that in his 'Chance Acquaintance' he has managed to fill a whole volume with the tepid and protracted flirtation of a commonplace young woman, and a worse than commonplace young man;—a flirtation which leads up to nothing, signifies nothing, which as far as we can see is utterly devoid of interest and instruction.

The method of the new school is no doubt the reaction from the obviousness of such a writer as Dickens, whose influence was at one time so largely felt in America; now each man would outdo his neighbour in subtlety; would prove that he is quite different to Peter Bell; that a primrose by the river's brim means so infinitely more than a primrose to his finer perception.

Perhaps the first note of the new music was struck when Mr. James produced his 'Roderick Hudson.' It is undoubtedly a remarkable book, though few of its readers may be disposed to agree with a friend of ours who divided the world into people who had read it and people who had not.

In 'Roderick Hudson' we are presented with a deep though less obvious truth, so interwoven with the story as to be identical with it—of course the true artistic method. The fine perception, the skilful wielding of language, the many qualities which have won for Mr. James his position as novelist, are all apparent in this book; but those other qualities which have made his subsequent work in so many respects a failure, are not wanting even here, in his greatest and most individual production. Some people are inclined to quarrel with him for the fragmentary nature of his stories, but whatever unity or completeness a work of art possesses, such lie deeper than its outward shape; what may fairly be complained of is that intense self-consciousness, that offensive attitude of critic and observer, above all that aggressive contemplation of the primrose which pervades his work. He never leaves us alone for an instant; he is forever labelling, explaining, writing; in vulgar phrase, he is too clever by half. And this perpetual cleverness defeats its own ends; it is wearisome and confusing for all its brilliancy. With the flash of gems in our eyes, and the smell of lamp-oil in our nostrils, it is impossible to give an undivided attention to the most important matter on hand. For a time, certainly, the intellect is stim-

ulated, the interest awakened; but the emotions are rarely stirred. And with regard to such a production as a story, is not much, very much to be learned from the emotions. We devour, breathless, whole pages of that "old-fashioned" and "intolerable" writer — William Makepeace Thackeray — without pausing to trouble our minds about ethics or æsthetics. It is not till later perhaps that shape and meaning grow upon our senses; that truth flashes up at us from the wonderful pages. We must stand back from the large and crowded canvas ere we can fully realise the splendour of the composition, the skilful massing of light and shade; perhaps indeed we never realise it at all, and are only vaguely conscious that it is a great work of art, a fragment of the eternal truth that we are contemplating.

Might not a novel of Thackeray's and a story of Mr. James' be respectively compared to a painting of Rembrandt's and a study of Mr. Alma Tadema's?

Those who have read Mr. James' story of 'Benvolio' will remember with pleasure that clever little study in surface emotions. Benvolio is a "complex" young man who, according to his mood, is poet or man of the world. But he vibrates between two loves, each of which appeals to a different side of his nature. One of the heroines, discovering the state of affairs, succeeds in banishing her rival to distant climes, only to find herself completely deserted by Benvolio, for whom her charm had been the charm of difference—a relative not a positive attraction. Nothing could be more perfect of its kind than this little sketch, either as regards conception or treatment.

Our complex modern world is full of such fine problems, and Mr. James is the writer best fitted to interpret them. But is it of such stuff that a great literature is made?

In his attempts at larger novels the weakness, not of the writer, but of his method, is plainly shown. "I find," says Mr. Howells, "in the 'Portrait of a Lady' an amount of analysis which I should call superabundance if it were not such good literature." Did Thackeray superabundantly analyse Beatrix Esmond? Yet most of us feel that we know her better than we do Isabel Archer; and own to far greater intimacy with Colonel Esmond than with Ralph Touchett. "The genius of Mr. James," goes on the authority before quoted, "is a metaphysical genius working to æsthetic results."

Perhaps; but must not the greatest æsthetic as a matter of course embrace ethical results? This, Mr. James seems instinctively to have recognised in 'Roderick Hudson,' but the work by which he is best known, which has made him the centre of a

crowd of disciples—his entire latter work—seems to be that of a very clever man exerting himself in the wrong direction. He is losing his sense of proportion; where he would be subtle he is often merely futile. Certainly he makes us see a great many things, but we should see them better if we could feel them as well. But if such things can be said of Mr. Henry James who is an artist, what can we say of his followers who have not all this distinction? What is his futility, his triviality, his want of human red blood to theirs?

Of these followers Mr. Howells naturally claims our first attention; he enjoys not only an American but a European reputation, and perhaps his work should be classed rather as a development than an imitation of that of Mr. Henry James.

Mr. Howells is a person of considerable shrewdness and some humour, who has taken to writing novels; he believes moreover that there is one infallible recipe for novel-making, and that he and Mr. James and M. Daudet have got hold of it.

No one can deny that up to a certain point he is highly realistic; that he is in any sense real is another matter. If we compare Henry James' books to paintings by Alma Tadema, so may we compare those of Howells to a photograph from life. There are all the familiar details; the table, the picture in its frame, the very orange lying cleft on the casual plate. We ourselves, to be sure, are a little self-conscious in our attitudes, a little stiffly posed; but then there were those uncomfortable head-rests, and the photographer made us put our hands on the silly ornamental columns he brought with him. We are like and yet strangely unlike ourselves. And the novels of Mr. Howells are just so many photographs where no artistic hand has grouped the figures, only posed them very stiffly before his lens. There seems to be quite a remarkable want of unity underlying his work; no doubt he is shrewd enough, funny enough at times, but he drives us out continually in that Pentonville omnibus of his which he, apparently, mistakes for an altogether different conveyance.

> "Greift nur hinein ins volle Menschenleben,
> Ein jeder lebt—nicht vielen ist's bekannt;
> Und wo's Ihr's packt da ist's interessant."—

says one who is greater than Mr. James and Mr. Howells put together. And Mr. Howells himself says with no little complacency, "Ah, poor real life which I love, can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish, insipid face?"

"To plunge into the full human life," is not for Mr. Howells, and truly the face which he shows us is foolish and insipid, though a good many people appear to find delight in it.

In the 'Lady of the Aroostook,' one of the longest of his novels, we are introduced to a monosyllabic young woman from the country who is wooed throughout the book by an irresolute young man; he has been a great flirt in his time, the author tells us. The course of true love runs sufficiently smoothly, and hero and heroine are duly married at the close of the story, by which time we know about as much of the latter as if she had in reality been our very silent fellow-passenger on board the Aroostook. The story has neither shape nor meaning; it is only very occasionally amusing; it is trivial and insipid besides violating all laws of artistic proportion; and the same remarks apply to 'A Chance Acquaintance.' Throughout the whole of the 'Lady of the Aroostook,' the heroine rarely says much more than yes, or no; but each monosyllable is generally followed by an elaborate statement of the varying shades of emotion it produces in the hero. This is no doubt a pleasing exhibition of subtlety and ingenuity on the part of the writer, but it might also strike some people as a trick, and a trick of the very cheapest.

In 'A Foregone Conclusion' a conception of some strength has been hopelessly spoiled by vulgarity of treatment. Mr. Howells has evidently given much thought to his Italian monk, who falls in love with the fair American; but he takes us too much into his workshop secrets; allows the smell of the lamp to pervade the whole production. The figures labelled Florida, Kitty, Lydia; the other figures of intolerable snobs labelled Terris and Staniford;—no doubt they are to be admired as the outcome of the orthodox system of novel-writing, but we should be sorry to think that they would go down to posterity either in England or America as types of nineteenth-century young men and young women.

To many, these remarks may seem like the traditional breaking of a butterfly on a wheel. But the writers quoted have taken so high a stand, their admirers and disciples claim for them so high and important a position, that we are judging them as they and their followers would be judged. Regarded from another standpoint, Mr. James is a man of a very high order of ability, who has produced impressive work; and Mr. Howells is a person of shrewdness, with a good deal of literary knack. But what we wish to consider is the general tendency of their work, and we unhesitatingly pronounce that tendency a bad one.

In the first place, the moral standard of the new school is a low one. It is with the selfish record of selfish people that these writers chiefly occupy themselves. There is never a spark of ideality (Mr. James used to give us occasional flashes), the whole

thing is of the earth, earthy. Take what is perhaps Mr. Howells' best work, 'A Modern Instance'; can anything be less ennobling than that minute and skilful study of such a scamp and snob as Bartley Hubbard, such a woman of commonness as Marcia Gaylord?

And we protest against the artificiality, the self-consciousness, the *pose* of the novels of the new school. Are people in real life perpetually on the *qui vive* to observe the precise shade and meaning of one another's smiles, to attach precisely the right interpretation to one another's monosyllables? Some of us take a certain melancholy pleasure in reflecting that we live in a morbid and complex age; but do the most complex of us sit tense, weighing our neighbour's turn of head, noting the minute changes in his complexion? Is our every word and look fraught with deep though subtle meaning? Those who have read the 'Lady of the Aroostook' will remember, no doubt, the consternation of its sub-hero Dunham when he observes Lydia to blush faintly on bowing to him at dinner. He concludes at once that she is in love with him, and proceeds to act on the conclusion.

> "Girls blush sometimes because they are alive,
> Half wishing they were dead to save the shame,"

says Mrs. Browning, but apparently that well-poised being the American girl never blushes without due cause. We all know how, in the hands of a master, detail can be used to broaden, not confuse effect; but it is a dangerous tool in the hands of persons of less correct instincts. It is all very well not to overlook the primrose, but roses make a better bouquet after all.

"The new school finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not really less vital motives." Among these half-hearted young men, these monosyllabic young women, these trivial ideal-less persons of the new fiction, are we ever shown the "operation of motives" "vital" as those which worked in the hearts of Maggie Tulliver, of Lydgate, of Colonel Esmond, even of old Mr. Osborne? In the whole range of the fashionable novel-literature do we ever come across a group of persons acting on one another to such tragic end, pointing so awfully yet unobtrusively to the irony of fate, as those composed respectively of Amelia, George Osborne, Dobbin and Becky; the Casaubons and the Lydgates?

The clever study of Marcia Gaylord is tragic enough for all its moral squalor and inartistic unreserve. But do we feel her tragedy as we feel that of Beatrix Esmond with its awful inevitability, its

great unpreached moral lesson? The men and women of Thackeray and George Eliot are neither for to-day, nor to-morrow; they are for all time. But it is not so with the people of the new novels. They are for us, who have just experienced that interesting little emotion, or tossed about with that pretty little passion.

For all their cosmopolitanism, it is an eminently provincial note which the new musicians have struck.

Shall we be allowed, without exciting ridicule, to say that what is wanting to these novels is a touch of the infinite? For all the fragmentary endings, they are so terribly finite. And in this finiteness lies the germ of decay. This is the heaviest charge we make against the new literature; it is a literature of decay.

In work of imaginative literature, when analysis supersedes narration; when the artist turns aside from the universal and simple to the particular and rococo; when he stands by us throughout to point out the mysteries of his work; then, indeed, however good in its way that work may be, it inevitably contains within itself the germs of decay.

In Mr. Howells' article we hear the death-knell of the modern novel.

"Will the reader be content to accept a novel which is an analytic study rather than a story?" We answer emphatically, no. The first function of the novel is pleasurably to engage the attention. Its truths must be conveyed to us by means not only of the intellect but the emotions. There are certain finer ethical points which can be understood emotionally as they never could be understood intellectually.

The skilful manipulation of emotional and intellectual machinery, so that one shall help and perfect the other, is the highest triumph of the novelist's art.

But perhaps, in spite of Mr. Howells, the novel is not dead or dying after all. Perhaps we are worthy of a better, fuller fiction than this self-conscious, half-hearted literature with its want of simplicity and moral greatness.

Perhaps after all we are not doomed to go down to posterity as skilful hands have depicted us in these small-beer chronicles of the soul.

In a Gondola.

Dark, it is dark! the stars have all gone out,
There is no moon with watery smiles to flout
The cold smile rippling round a colder mouth
That parches not my thirsty soul with drouth
Like a red lip left in the rich South.

Dark, it is dark! there is no light at all,
Except with the long oar-blade's rise and fall,
Except the phosphor-flashes of the brine,
And the quick light of eyes that gleam in mine,
But wakes no fires, Guinevra, as did thine!

Dark, it is dark! the darkness of black night,
Darkness of skies, and all that should be bright,
Darkness of waves, where the black shores begin,
A darkness wrapping one fair child of sin,
Darkness of all without, and all within.

H. C.-P.

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Phœbe.

Poor Phœbe! Whether of retrospect or forward-looking, small solace could come to her on this New Year's Eve; nor was the present in any wise so cheerful as to withhold her thoughts from wandering and wondering, from grieving over what was past, or facing with something like the helpless dread of a timid, hunted creature the abyss into which the relentless hours were compelling her. There was a handful of glow in the grate, but no more coal; in the cupboard there was one piece of bread for to-morrow's breakfast, but nowhere, as far as she could see, the price of a new loaf when that was done. Bad enough this, even when one is a grown man, whose noisy appetite is in itself a proof of energies eager for their task; bad indeed when one is a girl of not quite sixteen, weak from a long course of insufficient food, sadly shy under the best of circumstances, afraid of the world, afraid of oneself, with not a soul to turn to for comfort or aid. No wonder she sat so long, staring with her pretty eyes into the patch of red coal, which was as little able to overcome the damp and cold of the leaky garret as she herself to struggle with the dark, dread, unknown powers, ("social forces," we name them, with complacence,) which beset her on all sides. She didn't cry; even Phœbe would have felt the humorous inefficacy of such a resource; weeks ago, when her troubles just began, she had cried her fill. But her eyes grew very, very wide, and her forehead wrinkled itself out of all knowledge. And every now and then, when her thoughts had strayed into such labyrinths that she forgot for a few moments her bodily distresses, a shivering fit brought her back to herself. The window rattled loose in its frame; through the chink beneath the door, and up through the knot-holes in the boarding, swept stinging currents of wind. Her feet were already numb, and she had to hold her hands in her bosom to warm them.

Other life, even liveliness, there was in the room; but its presence suggested new sadness to her desponding mood. On the mantelpiece before her, placed there for the sake of possible warmth, was a little wooden cage, containing a very brown canary. This was her sister's bird. That sister had been a mother to Phœbe, the only mother Phœbe remembered; father too, for the matter of that,

since the real father's relation to his children had for years been merely that of an irregular pensioner, irregular in the times and the mode of his applications, but only too regular in the use he made of their bounty. The day came, indeed, when his importunities were no longer to be suffered; then the two had escaped him by flight, and made a new home for themselves, where at least they could enjoy the advantage of what they earned, and hope to live unmolested. But in the first summer of their freedom a sickness fell upon that brave, toiling sister, and the days of her guardianship were numbered. She died, and was kindly buried by the parish. Phœbe knew the place of her grave, but it was also the grave of as many other paupers as could be squeezed into the trench, and there was more pain than solace in going there to weep. The little brown canary remained, however; bought in a gay moment of the past spring, kept still and zealously tended by the poor child, who was all but its equal in innocence and fearfulness. "Chirrup," they had agreed to call it, and Chirrup still had his sufficing measure of seed, even when his mistress's daily bread was anything but sufficient in quality or quantity. And to-night, as if in very defiance of care and cold, the little fellow hopped ceaselessly from one to the other of his two perches, sharpened his beak as if to get an appetite, and, despite the hour, frequently justified his name with right good will.

Phœbe's sister had been a flower-maker, and Phœbe herself, having gone through her period of apprenticeship to the same handicraft, had now attained the position of "improver." When things went well, she could earn perhaps eight shillings a week; in time she might hope to become a "hand," and then, if lucky, might receive as much as fifteen. Nay, as years went on, it was within the grasp of possibility that she should even become a forewoman, in which case she was sure of some five and twenty shillings a week, and, unless her health broke down, might very well keep out of the workhouse to a tolerably advanced age. She might marry, of course, and, as a very gentle and sweet-faced girl, had perhaps a fair chance of doing so; but that was something quite beyond the sphere of her hopes as yet. At present all she thought of was the opportunity of earning her weekly eight shillings by honest work, and living on it, —well, as the others did; she knew no other signification of the word "living." Unfortunately, the proverb about the will and the way did not seem to apply to her case. It was no fault of her own that she had lost her work some weeks ago. The season had been a bad one; the powers and principalities who rule in such matters had decreed that it should be fashionable to wear feathers, and for flowers there was proportionately little demand. Hence trouble in the work-rooms here in Hoxton, where most of the flower-makers live.

The employer for whom she worked was a good-hearted man; he held out as long as he could, and when the girls came with pinched and eager faces begging him to find them something to do, he had even produced work for which there was really no demand, and, in mercantile phrase, had gone to the city and "slaughtered" it, just for the girls' sake. But at length he had to shake his head at every appeal, and, with an irony which he no doubt felt but did not mean, bid them take courage till the new season began, when perhaps things would be better.

Well, Phœbe was still alive. It would be hard to give an account, though, of how she had kept body and soul together in the meantime. When in work, she had paid three shillings a week for her room; subsequently she had managed to find this one, for which she only had to pay half-a-crown. And a nice room it was. It was a garret at the far end of a court; which court you reached by passing under a foul archway out of a filthy by-street. Needless to say that the floor had no covering, or that the wall was bare plaster, or that the rickety windows lacked blinds and curtain,—would, rather, have lacked the latter, had not Phœbe pinned across the lower half a poor little shawl which might better have been on her own shoulders. There was a bed,—mercy, how cold when you crept into it, and how thin the covering when you woke shivering in the night! There was a chair, a table, a basin on the floor in a corner, also actually a cupboard, made in a recess, wherein should have hung Phœbe's second dress, but that was represented at present by a little yellow card in her pocket. Well, it was a "home," after all, and hitherto the rent for it had been paid regularly. A little needlework, a little cleaning of doorsteps, some running of errands, minding of children now and then, helping people in the court to wash and prepare their vegetables for sale in the streets,—Heaven knows how the sum was made up every week; yet hitherto it had been. But to-night Mrs. Dabbs had waited in vain for Phœbe's wonted appearance down in the kitchen, and at length had come up to the garret herself, in quest of her dues. Alas! they were not forthcoming. Mrs. Dabbs was not a hard woman; what woman *could* have met that pale, patient, childish face, and insisted harshly till it was dewed with tears? It was the first instance of remissness, so Mrs. Dabbs said she wouldn't press, and then sat down and talked in quite a friendly way, principally of Mr. Quy.

You couldn't have spent many minutes in this room without wanting to know who Mr. Quy was. Whether the gentleman so called was impressed with the strangeness of his name to such a degree that it haunted him and compelled him to write it in very legible character whenever writing materials and a plain surface were at

hand, or whether his pride in its abnormality brought about the same consequences, cannot now be determined; the fact remains that this brief and singular appellation stared at you from every part of the plaster round the room, and was even written in places on the floor; nay, verily upon the ceiling, where a complete circle of "Quy's" in charcoal marked the spot whence an ambitious lodger might perchance have desired to see a chandelier depend. Who Mr. Quy was, Phœbe knew already well enough; on her first arrival, Mrs. Dabbs had lost no time in relating to her all that was known of his history. He had been the tenant of the garret immediately before Phœbe, his tenancy having stretched over a space of well-nigh three years. He was an old gentleman, Mrs. Dabbs said, who had known once what it was to ride in his carriage, and, presumably through loss of this luxury at the time of life when he most needed it, had grown "queer-like in 'is 'ead." He was always very poor, shockingly poor, yet, as Mrs. Dabbs recorded with appreciative emphasis, had always managed to pay his rent, even if he went without food to do it. He went out every day, and stayed out all day long, "gettin' his livin' promiscuous"; clearer details than this on the subject of Mr. Quy's pursuits were not to be obtained, at all events not from Mrs. Dabbs, and probably she told all she knew. His end was tragical. His non-appearance one night had caused a good deal of excitement in the court, where the passing of his rusty and decrepit figure at certain invariable hours had become a feature of the daily order of things. Inquiries were very shortly made in all likely quarters, and it was discovered that Mr. Quy, only an hour after he left home that morning, had been run over by a van, and killed on the spot. In his pocket was found the sum of three farthings, and, as he possessed neither means nor connections, he too was kindly buried by the parish. His grave was unmarked; but the piety of Mrs. Dabbs, who would not suffer the signatures on the plaster to be obliterated—indeed she had an objection to cleaning of any kind—left his name for the musing of posterity. Perchance it pointed no particular moral, but it at all events, on the lips of Mrs. Dabbs, adorned many a tale.

The deepest fit of brooding will at length yield to the instinct of activity, and Phœbe, when her eyes had half-unconsciously watched the utter extinction of the last glow in the grate, rose with a little sigh and looked round the room. A pair of stockings which urgently demanded the attention of the needle lay upon the bed, but the hands were too cold for sewing. She was lonely and miserable; it occurred to her that she might go out for half an hour before bedtime, but, as lonely and miserable people will, she shrank from the change which might have proved a relief. Besides, it was not her habit to

run about the streets at night; her sister had taught her a distaste for that; and another objection was that she would have to pass the pork-butcher's just by the entrance to the court, whence at this hour steamed forth odours of hot pease-pudding, "faggots," saveloys, and other dainties; the trial would have been too bitter. She looked round the bare room, and, inevitably, she thought of Mr. Quy. Poor old Mr. Quy! No doubt *he* had sat in this room through many a hungry hour, thinking of the pork-butcher's round the corner: but then he had the resource of writing his name on the wall. After all, though, she was better off than Mr. Quy; was there not a friend in Chirrup, who seemed to wish to comfort her, and remind her that she was not quite alone? She turned and put her little finger through the bars of the cage to be pecked at. And, by-the-bye, Chirrup's cage evidently wanted cleaning out; Phœbe's troubles had made her remiss in that duty for two or three days. That would be something to occupy her for a little. So she opened the door, and Chirrup, after pausing for a few moments with inquisitive eye on the threshold of his dwelling, fluttered out in the wonted manner, and perched on the brass knob at the foot of the bedstead. Scared thence by the girl's movements, he flew boldly on to the top of the cupboard, and there remained.

The little house being swept and garnished, Phœbe summoned back its occupant. But Chirrup was not disposed to come. Foolish bird, had he positively gone to sleep up there? To fetch him down, Phœbe made a little spring at the top of the cupboard, which was much taller than herself. Alas! instead of flying down, Chirrup, with unprecedented perversity, actually scuffled back into the recess, and was lost to sight. Striking against the wood was of no avail; calling proved equally useless; there was nothing for it but to climb on a chair and explore, for the first time, the flat top of the cupboard. Phœbe took up her lamp in one hand, and speedily discovered the fugitive, in the remotest corner, amusing himself apparently with a game of hide-and-seek.

"Dirty, dirty Chirrup! Why, you'll be all over black dust! Come here, naughty bird. Why, whatever——"

Phœbe's voice failed her. What were those things that glistened so in the lamp-light, in spite of the layer of dust upon them?

Money!

Yes, money; not a doubt of it, and laid here in a most extraordinary way. Half-crowns, shillings, sixpences—nothing less than sixpence—arranged in conical heaps, and in such order as to spell out a word, and that word no other than "Quy!" What! Poor old Mr. Quy after all a miser, hoarding up silver coins like this, here on the top of the cupboard? And to think they had lain here ever

since his death, and that no one had ever had occasion to look before this on the top of the cupboard! How good of Mrs. Dabbs to have such an objection to house-cleaning!

Phœbe came down from the chair, and stood, the lamp still in her hand, looking straight before her, seeing nothing. How long she might have stood thus it would be hard to say, had not Master Chirrup all at once grown tired of his game—which really was too one-sided—and come flying down to the mantelpiece, whence he hopped to his cage, and went at once to crack a seed or two out of the fresh supply. In an instant Phœbe was up on the chair again, and this time she did more than gaze. Partly it was awe of the sum of money, but quite as much a very natural feeling that she was somehow interfering with the repose of the dead, which prevented her at first from rudely disturbing the inscription, and would only allow her to remove a sixpence from the top of one of the little heaps. She looked at it; she bit it; she then descended and rang it on the mantelpiece. A real sixpence, indubitably. Her first thought had been to run down at once to Mrs. Dabbs and apprise her of the discovery; the ring of the sixpence dispersed this idea, and awoke in her breast the keen sense of possession. Why tell Mrs. Dabbs? Mrs. Dabbs was in no way related to the dead old man; nor was any one else, so far as was known. In quality of landlady, Mrs. Dabbs could certainly support no claim to the treasure-trove; at least so it appeared to Phœbe. In fact, was it not clearly a case for the application of the motto, "Findin's is keepin's"—as poor Phœbe would have delivered it?

Nay, no longer *poor* Phœbe. A third mounting of the chair, and, behold, the initial letter of Mr. Quy's name had half disappeared; in a very few moments not a trace of the embossed inscription remained, but there on the table lay a crowd of coins, impossible to guess at the sum they represented. After gazing at them for an instant, Phœbe, seized with a sudden fright, ran to the door, opened it, and listened. Not a sound in the house. Then she made herself secure with a sharp turn of the key and returned to gaze.

"Sixpence and sixpence is a shillin', and 'alf-a-crownd makes three an' six, and a shillin's four an' six, and another 'alf-crownd——"

Impossible to reckon like this; she was confused already.

"Chirrup, Chirrup!" she cried, abandoning the task and dancing round the table. "We're rich, birdie; we're rich, we're rich!"

Then, as if with a sudden flash, there came upon her the thought of her sister, who lay this New Year's Eve in the snow-palled cemetery, in an unmarked grave, and an anguish of regret put the climax to her agitation; she burst into weeping. She was a good-hearted girl. Oh, could but the dear dead sister come back to share this

fortune; had it but been sent some months ago, when the poor dying girl needed comforts,—and had to need them! Good things always come too late in this world.

But really the coins must be counted, and Phœbe at length set to work in earnest. She made separate cylinders of sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns; that seemed, as Dogberry put it, "the eftest way." There, at last—forty-six half-crowns; fifty-three shillings; twenty-seven sixpences. Yes, but what did that come to? Here indeed was a mathematical problem which for a long time refused to be solved. Never in her life had Phœbe reckoned silver up to a single pound; surely there were here many pounds. She grew hot with vexed impatience; she *must* know how much it all made! Arrange them in heaps of ten shillings each; then, would not every two such make one pound? With trembling fingers she put her calculation into practice. One, two, three,—*nine* whole pounds, and one shilling, and one loose little sixpence. Phœbe kissed the sixpence.

This time she could not dance round the table; impossible even to trust Chirrup with such a secret as this. Why, she had forgotten to close Chirrup's door; what was she thinking of? She rose to do it, but before she reached the mantelpiece, quite forgot her purpose, and stood once more gazing at nothing.

Slowly, slowly, the fact acquired reality in her mind that she was in possession of nine pounds, one shilling and sixpence. Don't think that she speculated as to how Mr. Quy became possessed of the sum; Phœbe's little brain had enough ado to grasp the certainty of her having inherited such a fortune. Yes, a fortune; who that she ever knew had been able to boast of such wealth as this? Her father, she had been told, in the bygone days, before he took to drink, earned sometimes two pounds a week; that in itself made a man of substance. But nine pounds, and all at once, and ready converted into small change! Phœbe's head smote the stars.

Her brooding recommenced, but this time there were no wrinkles on her forehead, no need to hold her hands in her bosom, she was as warm as if there had been a big fire in the grate. What should she do with it?—that was the subject of her thoughts. Probably there were some weeks yet to be provided for before she would have work again; but what was that out of nine pounds! It left a margin of limitless possibilities; it brought within her grasp the undreamt opportunity of forming and gratifying desires. The girls and women of Phœbe's class know nothing of social discontent; starve them, and they scarcely think it hard, so much is it in the order of events; give them just enough to keep together body and soul, and it will

not occur to them to be other than quite satisfied. Doubtless they peer at times into that far stretch of golden haze which shrouds the Elysium of the wealthy; they like to read of that country, and dimly to conceive its glories by much toil of the imagination. But they know too well that for them there is no road thither to ever be unsettled by the contrast between such dreams and the reality of their own waking life. And Phœbe imagined even less of luxuries than other girls of her kind. Very seldom had she been out of Hoxton; even the streets of the West End were strange to her. Her daily work had kept her in dingy little rooms up out-of-the-way streets; the flowers she helped to make she had scarcely seen in their "mounted" condition; far less did she know their appearance on the heads and dresses of those who had money to purchase such adornments. You cannot conceive how hard it was for her to even form precise ideas of what she would like. To her excited fancy the whole world lay at her feet; and the coolest of us would find if embarrassing to have to pick and choose under such circumstances.

Clothing, of course; warm winter clothing. Not of bright colours; no, for she had never been able even to put on the semblance of mourning for her sister, and that duty should regulate her choice of hues. She would be newly attired from head to foot; that at last was clear to her. Little by little she recalled a certain shape of hat she had observed in certain windows; a particular jacket, also, had unawares stuck in her memory. Then,—a dinner, oh, a really good dinner, something vaguely savoury to begin with, and something rather more definitely sweet afterwards. A day of shopping and of gazing at shops; a day of feasting! What a pity that poor Chirrup's appreciation in the matter of food was so limited; it was hard that he couldn't eat even a mince-pie. Was there no one for whom she could buy a New Year's present? Yes, there was Lotty Simpson, whose cough was always so bad; the only girl with whom she had had anything like a friendship, and who, unfortunately, had gone into service when the bad times began, so that their intercourse had come to an end. She would buy something, and take it to Lotty's mother, who would send it on. Surely here was employment for a day? One other thought, however, shaped itself slowly and timorously: the theatre. At the "Britannia," hard by, there was a pantomime; the walls around were glorious with advertisements of its unimaginable magnificence. Dare she go to the theatre?—would her sister have liked it? Impossible to decide; she must wait and see when the next night came.

Whatever could the time be? The streets were so still. There the church-clock was chiming; now it would strike. One!

Frightened at the lateness of the hour, Phœbe undressed herself in a few seconds, and sprang into bed.

The surging sheen of dream-waves subsided in the moments of waking, but, unlike the manner of dreams, left behind a real, bright windrow. On starting to consciousness, Phœbe's eyes sought the silver heap on the table, and she bathed her hands in the coins before putting them into the icy water. Only the fear of being heard prevented her from making the money ring a peal to the new year. Whilst dressing, she was glad to see that it promised to be a clear frosty morning; rain or snow would have been vexatious when one wanted to walk about so much. She must have slept long: the world was alive, and seemed to call to her to come and enjoy herself. She was too excited to have any great appetite for breakfast; the bit of bread in the cupboard would do well enough for the present, and she ate it as she did up her hair, drinking with it a little water out of a tea-cup. It would be good to be hungry at dinner-time. In a very few minutes she was ready to go out, but then came the question of where she should leave the money. She would have liked to carry it all with her, but that was impossible. For a moment she thought of replacing it on the top of the cupboard; it had lain safe there so long. But she could not venture it. There was only one place; her box, on which was placed the wash-hand basin, had a lock, and contained all the things she valued, chiefly poor memorials of her sister; she might safely leave the money there. How much should she take with her? This point was ultimately decided by the capacity of her shabby little purse; it admitted rather more than a pound, in large and small coins, and truly had never looked so plethoric. This was enough to begin with; if she succeeded in laying out such a sum by dinner-time, she could return in the afternoon for more. In the afternoon, too, she might pay her rent; Mrs. Dabbs would doubtless wonder at that, and still more at the glorious appearance which Phœbe promised herself she would shortly present; but she might wonder on Perhaps, on the whole, it might be prudent to move to another lodging; she would think about it.

So she carefully locked her box, and walked out of the court, and away into the high-street of Hoxton. Then she began to look into shop-windows. But growing familiarity with her wealthy estate was making her bold. Within walking distance was the City, whither all the flowers went from the work-room,—that crowded, roaring place, where the shops were far grander than here in Hoxton, and whither no doubt everybody repaired who had money to spend, and wanted the best. To this privileged class she now belonged. Phœbe forgot for the time her poor appearance; she could only think of the fat purse

which, for safety, she held tightly in her hand, and the feel of which made her warm through and through. So with many delays, she got into Shoreditch, and thence, by haphazard, as far as Cheapside. Here she found so much to look at that there was no getting on at all. A jeweller's shop held her as by a charm. If she only knew the price of this and that! There was a locket she would dearly like to have; she would put in it some of her sister's hair, of which she had a tress in the box at home. How much, she wondered, did those ladies' watches cost? They were so very tiny, the price could not be much. Ha, there was the price written above one of them; and it took away her breath. But this was gold; there were silver things. Now one of those bracelets; how would Lotty Simpson like one of those for her present?

But this would never do. It was half-past eleven, and, besides, she was positively getting hungry. Then, after all, jewellery was not what she wanted. Over the way she caught sight of a window full of gloves and shining, many-coloured silk things; that was more to her purpose. Those gloves were beautiful, the lined ones, and only three and sixpence a pair. This was well within her means, but when it came to entering the shop, then the sense of her shabbiness possessed her. She peeped at the door, but just then a lady came out, and Phœbe walked quickly on, abashed. And so it was everywhere. A large confectioner's reminded her once more of her appetite. Heavens, what an array of delicious things! She was hungry, keenly hungry, but it was beyond all possibility to think of walking up to such a counter as that, and addressing that superb young lady who stood behind it. Passing on, she was sorely tempted to buy of a man who was selling buns and tarts in a basket; but she felt that it would be a degradation. Presently she was in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the sight of mantles and furs, and bonnets and ribbons, once more absorbed her attention. But again the prices marked here and there frightened her, and she knew she would not have dared to enter, in any case. Phœbe began to feel that she had made a mistake; her mind recurred to those humbler shops in Hoxton, where she would feel much less timid. The hat and the jacket which she had thought of on the previous night came back to her. Had she not better make her way to the streets which were familiar?

So long had she gazed and wondered and wished, that the morning was all but spent. At length she tore herself away, and began to retrace her steps. But she was tired, and so terribly hungry. In a little she again passed the man with the basket, and this time she bought a bun of him, and ate it as she walked quickly along. It only made her hungrier. A certain vision had been gathering intensity before her mind's eye, a vision of that little shop in the

street "at home," where the big cold plum-pudding stood in the window, or had done so yesterday, and where you could get meat and vegetables for sevenpence. She fancied she could smell the very steam that at this hour made the windows dim and curled out of the doorway. Back, back to 'Hoxton! And why should she walk all the way, as if she were poor? Here by the Bank was a 'bus which would take her almost home. She entered it, and was very glad to rest her weary limbs.

So Phœbe went and had her dinner at the dirty little eating-house; a very thin red slice of roast beef, swimming in reddish water, two frost-bitten potatoes, a patch of stringy turnip-tops, and, to finish, a suety cut of cold plum-pudding. It did not satisfy her, and, comparing it with the feast she had anticipated, she felt humiliated, half angry with herself. Never mind, she would have a good tea; some mince-pies and currant-cake, she knew where. But all at once she had become anxious on the score of her money at home; she must run and see if it was safe in the box. Reaching her room, she was glad to find everything as she had left it, and being still very tired, she sat down on her bed, to rest and think.

What a pity that Lotty Simpson was not at home still; Phœbe could have trusted Lotty with the great secret, and her friend's advice would have been so valuable. What should she buy Lotty? Suppose she went and asked Mrs. Simpson's advice as to that? It would not be necessary to explain anything; indeed Phœbe did not feel that Mrs. Simpson was exactly the person to confide in; but at all events the latter could suggest what her daughter was in need of. Phœbe decided to do this, and, this time keeping her purse in her pocket, she started for Mrs. Simpson's abode. It was in a court very much like her own, but, instead of a garret, Mrs. Simpson occupied a cellar-kitchen; a card in her window told you that washing and mangling were done there. The front door stood open, as usual in these parts, and Phœbe went straight down the cellar steps. Standing in the dark at the bottom, she knocked, and was summoned to enter. At first it was impossible to see anything except a large fire in the grate; the cellar was full of steam. This came from a quantity of freshly-washed clothes, which hung on lines from wall to wall, drying.

But Phœbe knew the room. There was a bed at one side, and a few other articles of furniture necessary for use in the day-time; also a mangle. Here lived Mrs. Simpson and her youngest girl; Lotty had shared their accommodation before she went into service.

"Who's that?" cried the woman's shrill voice. "Oh, it's you, is it, Phœbe? Shut the door quick; the other lodgers doesn't like the steam to get upstairs."

"How's Lotty, Mrs. Simpson?" Phœbe asked, as she bobbed under the wet clothes.

"She'll never have no more the matter with her, my child," was the reply, in a voice which was sad, but yet confirmed in resignation.

Phœbe stood looking at her as if she did not understand.

"She come 'ome on Tuesday, right down bad; the missis said it was no use keepin' of her, as she couldn't do her work. I got her some stuff from the dispensary, but it didn't do her no good. Night before last she all at wunst begun coughin', and before I could even get to her, she was gone. An' it's best it should be so. She said she'd like to see you, Phœbe, and I was a-goin' to send for you, as it was yesterday; but it was too late, you see. There she lies," said the woman, pointing to the bed. "Will you look at her?"

"No, oh no! I can't, Mrs. Simpson!" Phœbe exclaimed, shrinking back in dread. Then she began to cry, and sobbed out her sorrow. Mrs. Simpson had not much to say; who shall blame her if she regarded Death rather as the deliverer than the destroyer? In any case, she had her day's work to attend too, and no time could be lost in vain mourning. Phœbe only stayed a few minutes. The presence of a dead body awed her, and, when she left the cellar, it was with eyes nervously averted from the direction of the bed.

She sadly took her way home again. The shock had impressed her gravely, and she had not the heart to go at once on her shopping; that could wait till after tea. Phœbe felt, too, that she could no longer enjoy the feast of sweet things which she had promised herself; it seemed improper to make merry just after coming away from the room where her friend lay dead. So she bought a few simple things—some bread, and butter, and tea—and took them up to her garret. Then she visited Mrs. Dabbs in the lower part of the house, for the double purpose of paying her rent and borrowing some fuel till she could supply herself. Phœbe experienced not a little nervousness beneath the landlady's look of surprise and curiosity; she explained that she had managed to get a little money to go on with, and then she was glad to escape with a bucket containing Mrs. Dabbs's loan of wood and coals. She made a fire, and, as soon as possible, some tea. By that time she was almost herself again, and, as she grew comfortable, with a cup of warm, sweet tea on her lap, her feet supported by the fender, she reflected how nice it would be to have just one or two mince-pies. And she could get them in a minute. But Phœbe resisted the temptation, and conscientiously went on with her bread and butter, thus paying her tribute to poor Lotty's memory. It is true the butter was spread just a little more thickly than under ordinary circumstances, but we must not demand too much of human nature.

Tea over, she carefully locked her door, and brought out the money from the box. She spread it on the table, and played with it much as a child plays with its "bricks," making heaps and squares and circles; moreover, she counted it again, to make sure that no one had interfered with it in her absence. Cheerfulness was returning, and thoughts of the things she would buy. As if to help her in regaining her equanimity, a lively street-organ all at once struck up somewhere close by, and she heard the scamper of children out of the court to have a dance on the pavement. It was already past nightfall, and the thought of the gleaming shops became irresistible. Again she went forth, and this time strayed no farther than Hoxton Street. There was plenty of choice, so many delightful shops, and such a variety of goods and prices, that she wandered from window to window and seemed as far from decision as ever. Now she would all but determine upon this or that article, but, when on the point of entering the shop, it seemed better to have just one more look at just one other window, and make sure that she would not have to repent her choice.

She came to the doors of the Britannia Theatre. They had that moment opened, and a great crowd of people was swaying, crushing, struggling in the excitement of entering. Phœbe had never in her life seen a pantomime; she was carried away by the spectacle of the crowd, and made up her mind to go in; but she did not know how much she would have to pay. Looking round to find some likely person of whom to inquire, she saw a girl of about her own age standing on the edge of the pavement, her hands in the pockets of a very shabby ulster, her eyes casting envious glances at the crowd. Phœbe approached her, and, with some shyness, asked for the information she needed. The girl had rather a pretty face, but it looked hungry, and she shivered as she replied. Phœbe, who had her money in her hand, turned away to take out sixpence for the pit, when, just as she was doing so, a couple of rough lads, rushing by to get a place, bumped against her, and jerked several coins out of her purse. Fortunately it was a well-lighted spot, and the money did not roll very far. The girl to whom Phœbe had just spoken was quick with her assistance, and nothing was lost.

"My! I only wish I was as well off as you," said the stranger, looking at Phœbe with a friendly smile, and again shivering as a sharp blast of wind swept down the street.

"Are you going in?" Phœbe asked, the inconsequence of the remark being due partly to her unwillingness to speak of her money, partly to the alarm from which she was just recovering.

The other shook her head scornfully.

"I'll pay for you," said Phœbe, who, to tell the truth, felt

lonely in her holiday-making, and welcomed the prospect of companionship.

"I'd rather you give me the money to get somethink to eat," replied the girl, who had kept a very keen eye fixed all the time on Phœbe's face.

"Are you hungry?"

"Had nothink since last night."

The girl showed her teeth as she laughed; they were faultless rows, and just now remarkably suggestive of an appetite.

"I'd go with you, and then we could come back together," said Phœbe, "only we should be late."

"*That* don't make no difference!" exclaimed the girl, her eyes brightening. "It's the same all through, an' it don't matter where you begin."

Phœbe allowed herself to be persuaded that this was indeed the case, and turned away with her new companion. The latter's taste led her to propose that they should feast on whelks at a street stall some little way off. Phœbe assented gladly, without considering whether this were precisely the best form of refreshment for a person who had fasted four and twenty hours, and they consumed the dainties out of oyster-shells, with a sprinkling of vinegar and pepper. Intimacy naturally developed under such conditions. The girl volunteered the information that her name was Jenny Evans, and by a coincidence, she proved to be, like Phœbe, a flower-maker, also out of work. She was curious about Phœbe's wealth, but Phœbe avoided being too communicative, and gave the same vague explanation which she had invented for Mrs. Dabbs.

They went back to the theatre, and Phœbe paid for both, but on entering, a cheerless prospect confronted them, or rather no prospect at all. The pit was crowded up to the walls; there was just standing room left, but as for seeing, that was another question. The orchestra was playing, and in a few minutes an excited movement among the people seemed to announce that the curtain had risen. By dint of much pushing and straining, Phœbe could just manage to catch brief glimpses of magic splendour, which tantalised her so that she could have cried with vexation.

"I told you we should be too late!" she exclaimed reproachfully to her companion.

But Jenny seemed to take the matter very indifferently.

"What's the odds!" she said. "You can come to-morrow. Let's go out. I feel awful faint."

Almost with tears in her eyes, Phœbe followed out of the crush, and they walked slowly along the street. Jenny, declaring herself revived by the air, chatted familiarly. Phœbe began to feel glad

that she had met so pleasant a friend, and in a few minutes found herself disposed to talk with less reserve; she began even to hint at a certain piece of luck which had befallen her, and to speak of things which she wanted, and had the intention of buying. The very first shop they came to, she made up her mind to go in and purchase a hat which she saw in the window. Jenny dissuaded her, but with difficulty.

"I wish I knew where I was a-goin' to sleep to-night," Jenny said, all at once. "My landlady's turned me out, 'cos I owe three weeks."

Phœbe forthwith proposed that her friend should come home with her, and the offer was cheerfully accepted. Jenny now had the direction of affairs practically in her own hands, and her idea was that they should go home straightway, taking in something for supper with them. Phœbe reluctantly postponed her purchases till the morrow; but, when they came to the pork butcher's shop at the corner of her court, the prospect of the very supper which she had so often in vain longed for drove all other thoughts out of her mind. A pound of boiled pork, twopennyworth of pease-pudding, a pennyworth of smoking carrots, all rolled up together in a piece of newspaper; Phœbe felt that at length she was making use of her fortune. Phœbe laughed with delight when they were up in the garret at last, and she turned the mass of animal and vegetable matter out of the paper on a plate.

A fire was soon crackling up under the kettle, assisting the feeble illumination of the candle.

"I say," said Jenny, looking round the room, "what's all that writin' on the walls? Is it some o' your larks?"

Phœbe laughingly explained as they sat down at the table; over the meal she grew more confidential. At last she leaned her face near to her friend's—how pretty she looked, with her extraordinarily bright eyes and the gentle flush on her cheeks!—and asked if Jenny could keep a secret. Jenny thought she could indeed, and she listened with eyes almost as bright as Phœbe's own whilst the latter told all the story of Mr. Quy's legacy. As a great, great favour Jenny might have just one glimpse into the box. They both went down on their knees together and peeped underneath the lid, then Phœbe made the box fast once more, and put the key back into her pocket.

Very soon after that things began to grow dim before Phœbe's eyes, and her limbs seemed to ache with weariness. To be sure, she had been walking about all day; it was natural she should be tired. Of two things only was she distinctly conscious: one the desire to go to bed and sleep, the other to previously impress upon Jenny the tremendous importance of the secret that had been told her, and to exact

promises of fidelity. Jenny was all assurances. She too was of opinion that it was bed-time ; she only just wanted to warm her feet at the fire a few minutes. And Phœbe watched her doing so, her head sideways on the pillow, till Jenny's form became a great vague, shapeless patch in front of the fire's glows, and then all was darkness.

When the sense of daylight once more visited Phœbe's eyes, it blended with a dim consciousness of trouble, and a fluttering at the heart which grew as she became aware of it. She struggled to regain remembrance, and at length raised herself and looked round the room. First, at Mr. Quy's sign-manual on the wall; then she thought of all the story that hung thereby.

"Jenny!"

She uttered the name with a start, but there was no one to reply to it. There was no one else in the room; no sign of Jenny anywhere. Only the plates and knives on the table to prove that it had not all been an unquiet dream. But her box! Why was the wash-hand basin put down on the floor, and the lid thrown back? With one bound she was on her knees beside it, throwing the poor contents frantically about, searching for what she could not find. Where was all her money, all the bright silver pieces, the half-crowns, the shillings, the sixpences? And where was Jenny?

It was a' dull morning. Thin flakes of snow were falling idly down into the narrow court, and it was bitterly cold. Poor Phœbe!

GEORGE GISSING.

Edouard Pailleron.

The brilliant ceremony at the Palais Mazarin on the 17th of January, when the author of 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie' was publicly admitted by M. Camille Rousset to the seat in the Academy rendered vacant about a year ago by the death of M. Charles Blanc, may well have led any Englishman present to seek for some explanation of the very exalted position which the successful dramatist, more than any other man of letters, takes as a matter of course among our neighbours across the Channel. Out of the forty academicians no less than nine are writers for the stage, to wit, Victor Hugo, Ernest Legouvé, Alexandre Dumas *fils*, Emile Augier, Octave Feuillet, Camille Doucet, Victorien Sardou, Eugène Labiche, and, lastly, the newly-elected member, Edouard Pailleron. The drama, in other words, takes nearly a fourth of the honours accorded to the whole literature of France. This state of things is in striking contrast with affairs at home, where a controversy was started some time ago and is, indeed, still raging, as to whether contemporary English plays have any claim to be considered as literature at all! However that may be, there can be no doubt that a man would be hard put to it to name nine play-writers worthy to be numbered in the first forty of our own men of letters, or, for that matter, a ninth part of nine.

It may be remarked by the way that while, in the world of literature, the French stage has been steadily gaining importance, its influence in the sphere of politics, formerly so great, has now almost entirely dwindled away. It has been said with, some exaggeration, no doubt, but still with more than a grain of truth, that the 'Mariage de Figaro' was one of the immediate causes of the Revolution, that Lemaître as Robert Macaire helped to overthrow Louis Philippe, and 'La Grande Duchesse' to drive Isabella from the throne of Spain. Nowadays, since Sardou's memorable attack upon Gambetta in 'Rabagas,' political satire has been almost as completely banished from the French stage as it has long been from our own. But this divorce from politics by no means implies that the stage has lost touch of the actual life of the day. On the contrary, the contact of the stage with real life has never

been so close as it is now. Realism—not the so-called "Naturalism" of M. Zola and his school, but an undistorted reflection of the world as it really is—has become the distinctive note of the contemporary French drama. Just as a generation ago the ingenious but conventional combinations of Scribe had to give way to the more human but still artificial pictures of illicit passion presented by the plays of Dumas *fils*, Augier and Sardou, so now the heavy *drame* is in its turn being superseded by the comedy of pure analysis, the result of the accurate study of social life and manners. Of this school of Comedy the archetype is undoubtedly the 'Monde où l'on s'ennuie' of Edouard Pailleron.

M. Pailleron, to judge from some reminiscences of his early life which he has recently made public through his friend M. Jules Claretie, began his career, in what used at one time to be the orthodox literary way, as a thorough Bohemian. Born in Paris in 1834, and educated there, he was called to the Bar, only to leave it almost immediately in disgust. His brief legal experience would seem to have been identical with that of Macaulay, for each of them had but one client, and that client lost his cause. Like another dramatist before him, Dicky Steele, M. Pailleron then enlisted in a regiment of dragoons; but, soon tiring of garrison life, he purchased a substitute and set off with an artist comrade for a six months' journey through Algeria and the African desert. After some further wandering on foot through Italy and the South of France, he at length returned to Paris, where he settled down to the steady "grind" of a literary and journalistic hack. It is said that the funny mock-heroic verses from the 'Art of Stopping Teeth' which are recited by M. Coquelin in 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie,' were actually written by M. Pailleron at this hard-up stage of his career, and sold to an advertising dentist.

"Muse, s'il est un mal parmi les maux divers
Que le ciel en courroux épand sur l'univers,
Dont le plus justement le bon goût s'effarouche,
C'est celui dont le siège est placé dans la bouche!

Oh! n'arrachez jamais même une dent qui tombe!
Qui sait si, quelque jour, l'homme adroit qui la plombe
N'aura pas conservé, soit en haut, soit en bas,
Cet attrait au sourire et cet aide au repas!"

But Pailleron soon found better work than turning out rhymed advertisements for dentists. While stopping at Cannes during his tour through the South, he had amused himself by translating Plautus and, under the influence of this author, he had written in verse a little one-act comedy on a classical

subject which, when completed, he allowed to lie idly by in a drawer. Here it was unearthed by a friend, who, struck by its grace and freshness, carried it off to the Director of the Odéon. It was at once accepted, and, brought out in September 1860, 'Le Parasite' had a run of more than eighty nights. This success was followed by a long series of others still more brilliant —for though M. Pailleron is said to have so sensitive a dread of failure as never to have attended the first performance of any one of his pieces, not a single play of his has ever been "damned"— by the 'Mur Mitoyen' and the 'Second Mouvement' at the Odéon; by the 'Dernier Quartier' and the 'Faux Ménages' at the Théâtre Français. All these plays were written in verse, and it was not until 1868 that M. Pailleron condescended to write in plain prose, when his one-act comedy of 'Le Monde où l'on s'amuse' was produced at the Gymnase. This little play, which was revived in 1881, is interesting not merely as being a sort of preliminary study for the larger study of 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie,' but for the lively picture which it gives of the very "mixed" condition of Parisian society at the end of the Second Empire, as typified in the *salon* where,

"Under a thin veil of social convention and the ordinary proprieties people come simply for the purpose of making assignations or of keeping them; where an intrigue can be entered on without attracting notice, conducted without mystery, and brought to an end without scandal. One of those easy-going houses, in short, where a respectable woman, though she will not be compromised by coming once, will certainly be talked about if she come a second time; a world which is not exactly the 'half-world,' because there are husbands there, nor yet the real world, because of their wives . . . something hybrid, a kind of no man's land, as it were, which has not yet been marked out on the map of morality, and which can only be described by the significant periphrasis, 'Le monde où l'on s'amuse.'"

This play and most of the earlier ones had been written in a house in the Rue de Rivoli (No. 33), which was burnt down in 1871, whereupon the author, who had already realised a handsome fortune from his pieces, removed to more luxurious quarters in the Rue Barbet-de-Jouy, and thence to a sumptuous *suite* in the old town-house of the Princes de Chimay on the Quai Voltaire. Here, however, the constant interruptions of troops of friends (one of the most intimate of whom, by the way, was the clever novelist and gallant sailor who recently fell in Annam, Henri Rivière), and those other social distractions which, as Macaulay used to complain so bitterly, are among the penalties of literary success, proved a serious hindrance to work, and Pailleron was

driven to hire a small attic in the house of the eminent chemist J. B. Dumas, in the Rue St. Dominique. At nine o'clock every morning he would start off for his attic, with a biscuit in his pocket, working steadily till five, and in this way three more pieces for the Français were written. The first of these was 'Petite Pluie' (1875), a one-act comedy, the *motif* of which is very like that of a pretty little piece of Mr. Pinero's, 'Daisy's Escape,' which was brought out at the Lyceum a year or two ago. This was followed by another one-act play, 'L'Etincelle' (1879), in which the admirable acting of Mdlle. Croizette served to entirely revive her then somewhat waning popularity. Two years later, in April 1881, the Français produced Pailleron's masterpiece, 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie.'

The similarity of title naturally suggests that the author put forward this play as a sort of sequel, or companion-picture, to 'Le Monde où l'on s'amuse.' The well-known tradition that literary sequels are unlucky is certainly supported by a host of instances,—to name a few at random, by the second parts of 'Don Quixote,' of 'Gulliver,' of 'Faust,' and of the 'Sentimental Journey;' and it was, it is said, in deference to this tradition that Victor Hugo changed the title of one of his dramas, originally intended to be called 'La Reine s'amuse,' to 'Ruy Blas,' lest it should be taken for a sequel to Le 'Roi s'amuse.' But 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie' is very much more than a sequel to the older play. They are in a sense companion-pictures; but while the one is merely a little bit of clever "genre" painting, the other attains to the ample dimensions of a cartoon, and of a cartoon every inch of whose canvas is crowded with interesting figures.

The action of 'Le Monde l'où s'ennuie' is supposed to take place in the present time, and the scene throughout the three acts is the country house near Paris of the Countess de Céran, an austere widow, who is by no means a warm-hearted supporter of the Government. The house is full of guests, of whom the first to appear on the scene is M. Paul Raymond (Coquelin), a young sub-Prefect of the Republic who might equally well be sub-Prefect under any monarchy you please, for he has neither political prejudices nor serious convictions of any kind, has recently married, and the object of his visit to the Countess is to present to her his young wife Jeanne (Mlle. Reichemberg), though whose cajoleries he hopes to obtain his nomination to a Prefecture. He therefore gives Jeanne a little preliminary "coaching" in the behaviour best suited to the set in which she will find herself, "for the world always judges the husband by the wife, and the world is quite right."

"So be always on your guard. Keep your eyes and ears open, say as little as possible, and cultivate a thoughtful smile. Compliment people as much as you like, and give them plenty of quotations. But they must be short and profound: in philosophy, Hegel; in literature, Jean-Paul; in politics . . . .

Jeanne.—Oh, I can't talk politics!

Paul.—My dear, in this house all the women talk politics.

Jeanne.—But I don't understand them a bit!

Paul.—No more do they, you goose! but what does that matter? Quote Machiavelli and Puffendorf as familiarly as if they were your own first cousins, and the Council of Trent as though you had presided over it. For amusement, you will be sternly restricted to an occasional walk round the garden, chamber music, and a rubber at whist. Add to this the effect of your very plainest dresses, and the word or two of Latin I have taught you, and I'll be bound that in less than a week every one will be saying 'What a capital wife for a Cabinet Minister dear Mme. Raymond would make!' And when a woman is talked of in this house as a fit wife for a Cabinet Minister, depend upon it her husband is on the high road to becoming one.

Jeanne.—But isn't Mme. de Céran in the Opposition set?

Paul.—Little simpleton! Between one side and the other, in the matter of Office, there is only the one distinction: the Government men ask outright for a post, and the Opposition get it without asking. No, no. This is the house where reputations are lost and won, where elections are 'managed,' and where your wily politician, under cover of literature and art, comes to do a little wire-pulling on his own account. It is Back-door to the Cabinet, Ante-chamber to the Academy, the Laboratory, in short, of success!

Jeanne.—Good gracious! What a very odd place!

Paul.—This place, my dear, is the Hôtel de Rambouillet of our own day: a world both of prosing and posing, where you get pedantry for science, sentimentality for sentiment, affectation for good taste; where no one says what he thinks nor means what he says; where politeness is a policy, friendship a calculation, gallantry itself but a means to an end; where you swallow your stick in the hall, and your words in the drawing-room; in a word, it is the Serious World.

Jeanne.—Why it must be a world of bores; and what influence can bores have?

Paul.—What influence, you little ignoramus? Why immense, enormous! Don't you know that the average Frenchman's horror of bores is carried to such a pitch that it becomes sheer veneration? He looks upon the bore as a sort of terrible deity, whose cult consists in slavery to 'good form.' You will never induce a Frenchman to take you seriously until you have bored him. Yes, gay as we Frenchmen are thought to be, we at bottom despise ourselves for being so: by nature chatterboxes, we stand in awe of those who are silent as owls; naturally warm and expansive, we let ourselves be 'sat upon' by the high-priests of the white tie, with their smug pedantry and pretentious emptiness; in politics, in art, in science, in literature, in everything. Your Frenchman laughs at these men, hates them, avoids them as he would the plague, but they alone possess his secret admiration and his absolute confidence. And you actually ask me what influence is wielded by bores? Ah, my love, there are only two classes of people in this world; those who don't

know how to be bored and are dead failures, and those who do and are a success—after the cleverest lot of all, the people who know how to bore others!"

Jeanne profits so shrewdly by this lesson that the Countess is completely won over by her serious airs, and by the little sententious phrases which are really her own invention but which she unblushingly attributes to Joubert, St. Evremond and Tocqueville. So amusingly did Mlle. Reichemberg bring out these sham quotations, that "comme a dit M. de Tocqueville" was for many months the pet catchword of the Boulevards. Unluckily, the Countess has assigned to the sub-Prefect and his wife separate rooms in different parts of the house, so that they are compelled to steal lovers' meetings on the stairs and in the corridors. As a consequence there resounds throughout the piece the perpetual smack of mysterious kisses, by which the newly-wedded pair unwittingly compromise every couple which happens to be near them.

Among the other inmates of the house is the Duchess de Réville (Mme. Brohan), a delightfully worldly old dowager of the *ancien régime*, good-natured, but shrewd, and endowed with a caustic wit which she uses unsparingly on the affectation around her. She takes a womanly interest in promoting the love affairs of young people in general, and in particular those of two other ladies of the house, Suzanne de Villiers (Mme. Jeanne Samary), a niece of Mme. de Céran, and Miss Lucy Watson, a sentimental but learned young Englishwoman, who translates Schopenhauer and quotes whole pages of Hegel. Miss Watson is contemptuously summed up by the sharp-tongued old dowager as "the young person who wears spectacles, and has no figure to speak of," but, when she subsequently has an opportunity of seeing Lucy in evening dress, she admits that "these English girls sometimes keep agreeable little surprises in store for us: she is not half so thin as I fancied." To this reversal of judgment, a funny bit of secret history is attached. The actress who was allotted the part of Lucy, Mlle. Broisat, at first refused altogether to undertake so unattractive a part as that of a young girl, "qui a des lunettes et qui n'a pas de gorge." Her colleagues, however, brought their entreaties to bear, and after a protracted series of negotiations, protocols and parleys, the fair actress accepted, on three stringent conditions. First, that Lucy Watson should be twenty-four only and not twenty-five—a year, more or less, it would seem, being a matter of great importance; second, that the "spectacles" should be a double-eyeglass, and moreover, a

double-eyeglass *without glasses*: third, that she should be allowed to have a figure—a fact which the Duchess herself should be made to point out to the public.

It is only with the arrival of the lovers of Lucy and Suzanne that the real action of the piece begins. Mme. de Céran's son Roger (Delaunay), a somewhat priggish young *savant*, who has been travelling in the East in search of Cuneiform inscriptions, has just returned, little suspecting that his ward Suzanne, whom he left a mere child, has grown into a charming woman. Of course, guardian and ward fall in love with each other, and, equally of course, it is some time before they recognise the real nature of their affection. Now Mme. de Céran, who has other plans in regard to her son, destines the hand of Suzanne for her own guide, philosopher and friend, M. Bellac (Got), an eminent professor of the Collège de France. As it was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven to dwell among men, so it is the special mission of M. Bellac, whom the Duchess calls "one of the *abbés galants* of the Ecole Normale," to bring philosophy out of dreary lecture halls into aristocratic drawing-rooms, where he holds quite a little court of fine ladies, by whom he is petted and worshipped. To complicate matters, Bellac is in love with the sentimental and Hegelian Miss Watson, and a note which he has sent her in a feigned hand, asking for a meeting in the conservatory, is picked up by Suzanne, and subsequently by Roger. Suzanne thinks the note is from Roger to Lucy, Roger that it is from Bellac to Suzanne, and thus jealousy sets to work to fan the flame of their mutual passion.

These materials for a plot are stale enough, and even trivial, for M. Pailleron's method shares the distinctive characteristic of the new school, a complete disregard of mere stage-mechanism: indeed, so little importance does he attach to the old dramatic canons, that in the second act of the piece, the action is almost entirely suspended. This act strikes the dominant note of the play, a note pitched in the key of the 'Femmes Savantes' and the 'Précieuses Ridicules,' and the inevitable comparison with Molière, which is provoked by the close likeness, both in subject and treatment, of 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie' to these two plays—a comparison which would be fatal to nine out of ten of modern playwrights—is an ordeal out of which M. Pailleron's brilliant wit and satirical *verve* bear him triumphantly.

The curtain rises for the second time on Mme. de Céran's drawing-room, turned for the nonce into a sort of lecture hall, where the hostess and the bevy of aristocratic blue-stockings who surround her are seen ranged in a semicircle, listening atten-

tively to a long-winded discourse on the Vedic mythology by the Baron de St. Réault, and comprehending about as much of it as the British Association ladies did of Professor Cayley's famous address on space of *n* dimensions. The Baron is a pedantic old Orientalist who bores his friends with the Maha-Bharata and the Zend-Avesta, and is tersely described by the irreverent sub-Prefect as the "philosopher whose *father*, you know, was so clever," for it is on the strength of his illustrious paternity that the Baron has obtained a number of snug appointments and is now posing as a candidate for the Academy. But in this enterprise he has a formidable rival in the person of Bellac. The latter, who is still tolerably young and good-looking, practises seductive airs and graces, while with each pseudo-philosophical phrase he distributes among his fair devotees glances fraught with sentiment. The utter nonsense the author puts into his mouth is greeted by the ladies with a chorus of unmeasured praise, which is a modern version of the rapture of Philaminte and Armande over the sonnets of Trissotrin in the 'Précieuses Ridicules.' Bellac yields to the entreaties of the ladies to give them a little discourse on their favorite topic.

"'Love, that feebleness which is a force! that sentiment which is a faith, the only faith may-be, which can boast of having no atheist!'

The Ladies.—Oh, too too utter!

Bellac.—I was prompted this morning—it was at the dear Princess's, *à propos* of German literature—to say a word about a certain philosophy, which bases all our thoughts and actions upon instinct.

The Ladies (*protesting*).—Oh, oh!

Bellac.—Well, I took the opportunity to declare emphatically that the opinion in question is very far from being my own, and that I reject it with all the energy of a soul not ashamed to recognise its own existence.

The Ladies.—Hear, hear!

The Countess (*aside*).—What a beautiful hand he has!

Bellac.—No, ladies, no! Love is not, as the German philosopher would have us believe, a mere specific passion, an illusion with which Nature fools mankind in order to arrive at her own ends; no, a thousand times no! if, that is, we have a soul! Let us then leave these degrading theories to sophists and vulgar minds; let us altogether refuse to discuss them, answering them only by silence, the speech of oblivion.

The Ladies.—What profundity!

Bellac.—Heaven forbid that I should go so far as to deny the sovereign power of beauty over the faltering purpose of man. I see before me (*glancing round him*) more than enough of that to triumphantly confute such a proposition.

The Ladies.—Dear fellow

Bellac.—But above this perceptible and perishable beauty there is another, unlimited by time, invisible to the eye, which is only known

to the purified spirit; I speak, dear ladies, of the essence of love itself, the union of two souls which wing their flight far from our sordid earth into the azure infinities of the ideal!

The Ladies.—Bravo, bravo!

The Duchess.—What bosh!

Bellac (*looking at her*).—This love, laughed at by some, by others denied, to most of us utterly unknown, exists all the same. With a few chosen spirits, as Proudhon says, *l'amour n'a pas d'organes.*

The Ladies.—Consummate!

The Duchess (*breaking out*).—Oh! This is outrageous nonsense!

The Ladies.—Duchess!

Bellac (*bowing to the Duchess*).—I repeat, this love exists. Noble hearts have felt it, great poets have sung its praises, and in the paradise of our dreams we behold seated those radiant figures, who are the immaculate witnesses to an immortal and purely psychical love; Beatrice, Laura . . . .

The Duchess.—Laura! Why, my good sir, she had a family of eleven children!

The Ladies.—Duchess!

The Duchess.—Yes, eleven! Is that what you call psychical?

The Countess.—But they weren't Petrarch's, you know, Duchess: let us be just.

Bellac.—Heloïsa . . . .

The Duchess.—There's another baggage for you!

Bellac.—And their sisters of yesterday, Elvira, Eloa, and many more unknown to fame! For it is more numerous than you think, this company of chaste and sweet loves. I appeal to any one of these ladies!

The Ladies.—Too, too true!

Bellac.—The soul has a language of its own, aspirations of its own, ecstasies and tortures of its own; and though it is yoked to the body, 'tis but as the wing of the bird—to lift it to the skies!

All.—Bravo! Charming! Delicious! Exquisite!

Bellac.—Dear ladies, the praise is yours. I have only been giving expression to ideas which are, after all, your own."

Hardly has this discourse on "psychical love" come to an end, when a third personage appears upon this scene. This is the tragic poet, Des Millets, long, lean and hollow-eyed, who comes in carrying under his arm an enormous roll of manuscript. It is his tragedy 'Philippe Auguste,' which has been rejected by the Français and the Odéon for the last fifteen years, but the mere sight of which thrills all the ladies with respectful emotion. M. Pailleron takes care, however, not to weary his audience by introducing three lectures on the stage in the same scene, and accordingly transfers the poet and his admirers to the adjoining drawing-room, leaving the stage clear of all but Mme. De Céran and the Duchess. By-and-by the door of communication is opened and shut three times in succession, to allow of the escape of, first, Jeanne Raymond, then of Lucy Watson, and lastly of Suzanne, all three complaining of a headache. And as each comes out, the

loud voice of the poet is heard bellowing out his ponderous Alexandrines, the sound rising and falling with the gradual opening and closing of the door. In this trick of the door and the three successive whiffs of Tragedy, M. Pailleron has had the luck to hit upon a dramatic effect which is not only irresistibly comic, but, we believe, absolutely new to the stage. The reading over, the poet and his auditory return to the scene, and the usual compliments are showered on him. But they are somewhat double-edged. An old general, who has consented to listen to the poem because "its hero was a military man," announces that "after all there's nothing like Tragedy. . . . . for the masses!" Another listener, after deep reflection, hazards the judgment, "Yes, there is certainly *one* charming verse," and every one chimes in, "Oh yes! one *very* charming verse." But, unfortunately, of this charming verse nobody, when put to it, can recollect one word.

As in the second act M. Pailleron has drawn his inspiration from Molière, so in the third he has borrowed both action and *mise en scène* from Beaumarchais. The scene is now shifted to the conservatory, which, it will be remembered, is the spot which Bellac's note had appointed as a rendezvous for Lucy. As it happens, the sub-Prefect has also selected the conservatory as a convenient place for a little quiet billing and cooing with his wife, an indulgence which the arrangements of the Countess's house have hitherto rendered somewhat difficult. Here, too, come Roger and Suzanne, closely followed by the Duchess and Mme. de Céran, who conceal themselves behind the orange-trees. All this is, of course, a reproduction of the famous scene of the chestnut-trees in the fifth act of the 'Mariage de Figaro,' and the author has had the wit to anticipate the charge of plagiarism by making the Duchess herself remark the resemblance. This artful mode of disarming criticism is, by the way, a favourite device of M. Pailleron's. In the 'Monde où l'on s'amuse,' for instance, where he avails himself of the well-known incident of the broken sequin in 'Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle,' he takes care to furnish one of the characters with an allusion to Dumas' play. Lucy Watson and Bellac, who are the last to enter the conservatory, in the semi-darkness think themselves alone, and Bellac hastens to declare a passion which, though wrapped in a cloud of mystical phrases, proves to be the very reverse of "psychical." It is Tartuffe and Mme. Orgon over again. The manner in which these two pedants of opposite sex dispute over a definition of love in terms of high philosophy, discussing "summum" and "terminus," object and subject, the ego and the non-ego, is very diverting to the listeners behind the orange-trees, but the interview is abruptly brought to

an end by the resounding smack of a kiss—one of the interminable series which are exchanged between M. and Mme. Paul Raymond. One pair of lovers thus put to flight, Suzanne and Roger meet, and then follows a delicious bit of dialogue, in which the author seems to have caught something of the delicacy and the peculiar charm of a *proverbe* of Musset. The contrast with the wooing of Bellac and Lucy is very marked. Roger, under the magic touch of that passion to the existence of which his eyes are at length opened, forgets all about his Cuneiform inscriptions and his report on the *tumuli* of Asia Minor, and pleads his love with simple manly eloquence. Suzanne, who has hitherto been merely a pert and vivacious child, a kind of Cherubino in petticoats—a type of which M. Pailleron had previously given a sketch in the part so charmingly played by Mme. Samary in 'L'Etincelle,' is calmed and rendered serious by her lover's depths of feeling. The woman in her is awakened: she suddenly sees clear into her own heart, and the passion she discovers there steadies and awes her. After a long pause, she rises blushing, and in a very low, very sweet voice, whispers, "Let us go." These three little words which escape from her half-closed lips are a graceful ending to a scene which, exquisitely played as it could not fail to be by two such artists as Jeanne Samary and Delaunay, is almost as sweet and fresh as a love passage of Shakespeare.

The conclusion has, of course, been long ago foreseen. The Duchess, who has overheard everything, insists upon the marriage of Bellac with Lucy, and, despite the objections of Mme. de Céran, Roger is made happy with the hand of Suzanne. The sub-Prefect gets his promise of a Prefecture, and the curtain descends as Jeanne, about to express her gratitude in another *impromptu* fathered on St. Evremond, is interrupted by a reminder from her husband that there is now no need for her to invent any more quotations.

Plot, once more, is not M. Pailleron's strong point. The intrigue of 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie' not only reproduces, as we have already pointed out, some of the most familiar effects of Molière and Beaumarchais, but has, we may add, a strong family likeness to the *Camaraderie* of Scribe. M. Pailleron, in fact, is not a *creator* at all: he is only a clever *arranger* of other men's materials; but what he steals he arranges so well, that we are only too ready to compound the theft. And for the vigour of its satire—satire classical in its breadth and yet brought down to date, "Molière revu par Grévin," as a critic has happily said—nothing like 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie' has been seen on the stage in the present generation, while its dialogue positively sparkles

with *mots*. Many of the latter, it is whispered, were picked up at certain dinners at which Pailleron and a few literary friends, Augier, Dumas, and some others, were in the habit of meeting once a month, and if this be true, the brilliancy of the dialogue is easily accounted for.

But it was not, after all, to his literary excellence that this comedy owed its tremendous success, so much as to a conviction on the part of a scandal-loving public that the principal characters were intended for caricatures of several well-known members of Parisian society. It is a question whether a flavour of personality does not run the risk of spoiling a play so good on its own merits as this is, the spicy seasoning which will improve an insipid dish only ruining one of delicate flavour. Of this no one of course is better aware than M. Pailleron himself, and the preface to the book of the play accordingly contains a repudiation of the charge of personality, "which the public will always insist of discovering for itself in a Comedy of Manners, just as a man who reads the description of some disease in a medical book straightway fancies he has got it." But, this preface notwithstanding, the resemblance of the principal character in the play to a certain well-known professor is too close to be denied; in fact the author, far from disguising, has done his best to emphasise the likeness of Bellac to M. Edme Caro, member of the Academy, and Professor in the Paris Faculty of Letters. Like the copy in both respects, the model was lecturer on philosophy, and the ladies' professor *par excellence*. It is said that between two and three hundred ladies were in the habit of crowding to hear his Wednesday lectures at the Sorbonne. Moreover, the very expressions of Bellac in the discourse of the second act are in many instances taken bodily from two of M. Caro's books, 'L'idée de Dieu,' and 'La philosophie de Goethe,' and the name, Bellac, was, it is said, in the first draft of the play Orac, i.e. "Caro" reversed. As if this was not enough, the actor (Prudhon) who on the tenth night of the piece replaced Got, to whom the part had proved unsuitable, was made up in exact imitation of M. Caro. The same face, the same portliness of mien, the same figure, the same greyish whiskers, even the same habit of pensively stroking them. To find another caricature so frank as this we must go back to Aristophanes. Molière, it is a matter of common knowledge, at first intended to call Tri-*cotin* the character which he ultimately called Trissotin, and in whom the public easily recognised the Abbé Cotin, but he never went so far as to mimic the Abbé's personal appearance on the stage.

The attack was direct: the effect prodigious. In less than a fort-

night after the production of Pailleron's piece, M. Caro's audience at the Sorbonne diminished by half, or rather underwent a complete transformation. Whilst his old flock dispersed, the Lecture Hall was filled each week by a new public, a public attracted by curiosity to see the model after having laughed at the copy. Happily the end of the Academic year was at hand. M. Caro applied for a substitute, and next session his course of philosophy was not recommenced.

From the moment of the production of this play, M. Pailleron's succession to a seat in the Academy was never doubtful, though there are not wanting malicious wits who hint that his speedy election to what has been satirically dubbed a "Branch Office of the *Revue des deux Mondes*" was not unconnected with the fact of his being the son-in-law of the late editor of that very respectable publication. One can certainly hardly avoid wishing that it should have fallen to the turn of M. Caro to reply to the speech of the new member on the 17th of January. The public would then in all probability have enjoyed one of those oratorical duels for which Academy Receptions are famous, for M. Caro has *bec et ongles*, as the French say, and—as his speech welcoming M. Maxime du Camp showed—a caustic and unsparing wit. But it is to be feared that poor M. Caro has not yet recovered from the blow so rudely dealt him in 'Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie.'

Béro: A Story of Monte Carlo.

Chapter X.

TRANSITION.

"If thy heart, waking in the depths of night,
Quivers and sinks
As on thy lips thou feel'st a breath,
A breath of flame,
Know that unseen beside thee
'Tis I that breathe."

This conversation on the beach at Cap Martin seemed to create a crisis in the relations of Warrender and Madame Fano. The slight mutual embarrassment, impulsive appeal on her part and earnestness of response on his, marking their first approaches to intimacy, were merged now in an unconstrained intercourse, that allowed much to be taken for granted, and in which it was difficult to draw the line between what was actually said and what was tacitly understood.

Both were deeply conscious of the influence each exercised over the other, yet neither quite ventured to analyse it. That dreamy sense of diffusiveness and mental communion; the vague longings and unrest half sweet, half-sad; the involuntary turning of mind to mind, and the constant desire to impart certain poetic fancies haunting the imagination of each—all these indications of dawning regard were recognised by Varuna and, if framed in thought, were attributed to the newly-forged chain of sympathy that connected herself, Helena and the new-comer. It is sometimes hard to separate cause and effect; and in this case Varuna was at a loss to discover whether her increased interest in Helena had been inspired by the meeting with Warrender, or whether the latter had gained importance in her eyes through his relations with her half-sister.

She found herself frequently marvelling at Helena's rejection of this man, who seemed to her, of all she had ever met, the one to whom a woman might in greatest security confide herself. An almost fierce desire seized her to plead his cause, to tear away the spider-webs of religious prejudice, which she felt convinced fettered Helena's will. She longed that he should be happy.

Life was so troubled, the desires of men so low, their fancies so brief, it seemed cruel that the fervour of this heart should spend itself and be wasted. Her own heart throbbed in pity. Poor Varuna! Love had hitherto only exhibited himself to her in shapes which had provoked her scorn, and had almost made her exult in the suffering she inflicted. She had fancied that this insensibility arose from her own shallowness and falsity; now it came upon her like a revelation that she had always been true to an unconsciously cherished ideal, and that it was the truth in Warrender's soul, meeting hers, which forced her into such passionate sympathy with his deeper feelings. She had never been brought into connection with this large-souled, simple, straightly-looking outward type. Here was no posing for effect, no encouragement of morbid sentiment, no paltry vanity lowering god-like love to its own earthly level. Warrender's mien expressed a quiet sadness which touched Varuna more deeply than the most despairing exhibition of melancholy.

"Why should I be sorry?" she asked herself in her more cynical moods. "If he were *my* lover, I should be as impatient of his love as I am of *their* sighs and reproaches."

But he was not her lover, nor ever could be, seeing that he loved her half-sister. This fact she impressed upon her mind with unnecessary force, possibly from the secret conviction that in it lay her sense of safety, and the justification of her impulsive reliance upon him.

It may have been as Varuna asserted, that she possessed an instinct transcending the limitations of ordinary human intelligence, and enabling her to catch dim glimpes of shadows thrown by the future. Certain it was that Warrender's appearance upon the eve of that year which had been foretold to her as fateful, the link between him and Helena, and the strange coincidence of the latter's expected arrival at Monte Carlo, stirred her imagination, chimed with her superstitious fancies, and predisposed her to connect him with the threads of her destiny. Her mental attitude towards him was of a kind which she could not have conceived it possible that she should assume towards any man. She, in whom a wretched marriage seemed to have dried up every fount of feeling, who had scoffed at herself as hard and mercenary, and to whom coldness had been as a shield, alike against insult and honestly proffered love, now resembled a half-awakened girl, in her moods of wistful tenderness, her strange fits of dreaminess, and the fearlessness with which she accepted this new element in her life, wondering only why, since friendship was so sweet, so much eloquence should be expended upon the intoxicating delights of love.

Another welcome change in her temperament she attributed to his influence. She had hinted to him of morbid terrors, mental horrors, a sense of isolation, which made her at times fancy herself an automaton, wound up to smile and act, while the real disembodied spirit looked on as it were in loathing of this travesty of life. These feelings, which frequently overpowered her in such a manner as almost to justify her dread of losing self-control, and to which the only alterative seemed to lie in the excitement of play, had, since the new year began, almost entirely left her. The sense of a burden raised was inexpressibly sweet: it was a foretaste of what existence might be to the pure, untroubled, loved—to such a woman as Helena. At night, when she awoke, dreading the cold perspiration and ghastly shrinking from unseen presences, which had made the darkness a torment, she was surprised to find herself composed and trustful, as though a mother's hand clasped hers. She would turn upon her pillow to meet in fancy the gaze of Warrender's eyes, and then close her own again, her whole being pervaded by a conviction of safety and peace.

Warrender was undergoing a somewhat similar phase of experience. From his soul also a trouble had been lifted; for him, too, life now held a new and absorbing interest. He would have been shocked and revolted by the suggestion that his love for Helena was in process of transference to her sister: yet certain it was, that the largest share of his thoughts was given to Varuna. What man could withstand the fascination of her variable manner, the homage conveyed by her reliance upon his opinions, the frank submission of one so beautiful, so complex, and to others so unapproachable? There was a grand simplicity in Varuna's subservience, an unconsciousness and innocence at total variance with the character she had acquired. No coquette could have played the part without loss of dignity; but her frankness compelled the most absolute respect; and even Mrs. Featherstone's banter was silenced by the grave directness of Madame Fano's reply, when challenged as the heroine of that Monte Carlo drama upon which the pretty Australian still laughingly insisted.

"I see no indications of drama at present, Mrs. Featherstone. Your imagination must supply the harrowing complications and violent emotions which one connects with the idea of tragedy. Cast your play without me. I am too indifferent to act the heroine."

"Then," observed Mrs. Featherstone, "I shall certainly practise indifference, since it succeeds so well. There is nothing I adore more than being talked about! But for that, several things are necessary. One must be tall, and one must have a manner which piques curiosity."

Colonel Cazalette turned to Madame Fano. They were loitering in the vestibule of the Casino, waiting for the rest of the party.

"Do you observe," he asked in a low tone, "that I make an effort to cultivate indifference?"

"You succeed very well," she replied.

"I am a good actor. But you know me well enough not to need assuring that I neither change nor forget. For me, a passion once felt is the passion of a lifetime."

"I can hardly imagine that you are sincere," she answered pointedly, "after what I saw yesterday."

As she spoke, her eyes turned significantly towards a dark-eyed, slightly-rouged, and extremely well-dressed woman—evidently one of the fallen angels to whom Monte Carlo is a pleasant abode; and who, with her unfurled crimson fan coquettishly shielding the lower part of her face, was leaning against a pillar, her audacious gaze fixed upon Cazalette.

He flushed slightly and drew Madame Fano aside, to a settee placed under the shelter of a stand of ferns.

"Sit here, and be merciful. You are right, and your rebuke gives me more pleasure than pain, for it tells me that you are not absolutely indifferent. But you are a woman of the world, and know——"

"Oh yes, I know, I know," she interrupted. "I knew all this long ago. Do not suppose that I made the allusion because of any deep interest in you. Only, it is not worth while trying to make me think you different to what you are. You might perhaps impose upon one more innocent. I am hardened and world-worn. I can hardly believe in goodness, when I see it."

"Do you ever see it?"

Varuna did not answer.

"Whatever my faults," he exclaimed passionately, "you must at least be aware that I have never loved—never can love any woman but you."

"The old story; and it is five years since you last repeated it. I thought that after so long a time it would have been forgotten."

"That story will never be forgotten while I have breath. Say that you believe this."

"It does not matter what I think."

"No; it does not matter. I have given up hope, and you cannot accuse me of having troubled you, since my return, by any obtrusive display of my feelings. I accepted my fate on New Year's morning in the gardens at Monaco. Your heart belongs to

this Englishman. I saw then that you were conquered—you—the *edelweiss*, the most inaccessible of women, to love whom meant despair and ruin."

"You are utterly mistaken!" she exclaimed vehemently, though in a voice hardly above a whisper. "There is nothing of that kind between Mr. Warrender and me. He wishes to marry my sister."

A peculiar smile curved Cazalette's lips. "He will not marry your sister."

At that moment Lord Bretland appeared. "A thousand apologies, Madame Fano. You have been waiting for your tickets. Here are the wraps. Mrs. Kilsyth has had one of her inspirations, happily while I was at hand to act as agent and stake the napoleons. The number came up and we are all considerably elated. Warrender, I hear, has been winning heavily for you. When is his luck going to turn? It is simply marvellous?"

"His luck will last just as long as Madame Fano's indifference," said Mrs. Featherstone, who had overheard the last remark. "That is the philosophy of gambling."

Thus the threads of destiny crossed and recrossed, and life proceeded merrily in the little principality. Helena's journey had been delayed. Three weeks had gone by and the Monte Carlo season was at its height. Yachts with pennons flying, lay at anchor in the harbour. The terraces and gambling-rooms were crowded with fashionable English. Celebrities of all nations jostled each other in the vestibule. Patti warbled in the theatre. Two or three scions of royalty drove over daily from Nice; and the demi-monde overflowed the Hôtel de Paris. At the Hôtel des Anges every corner was occupied. General Featherstone had departed with his violin and his musical scores to complete his opera in the comparative seclusion of San Remo; and his pretty wife was still exploring the mysteries of civilization under the superintendence of Lord Bretland and the immediate guidance of several lately-arrived London admirers.

Cazalette remained in his first quarters. He avoided Varuna, but daily his ascendency over Mrs. Kilsyth became more marked. That lady was not in her usual spirits. She looked worn and ill at ease. Her eyes wandered nervously, her lips were rarely closed; and the inconsequence of her speech, and her fits of alternate excitement and depression, suggested morphine or stimulant of another kind. She went regularly to mass, talked of dreams and auguries, indulged in a thousand superstitions, offered up an unlimited number of candles, and extended the mortification of her gambling instincts to abstinence from play on Fridays, as well as on saints' days.

The most marked change was visible in Varuna. Her face had softened; a tremulous sensibility showed itself on her lips and in her eyes. Her manner was more gracious, more unconstrained, at times it was almost joyous. She took delight in the beauty around her. Nature seemed to speak to her with a caressing voice. Life presented more healthy interests. It was as though a hideous spectre had been removed from her gaze. She lent herself with animation, too, to the various plans for amusement—drives, fêtes, and excursions—organised by the new English visitors. Acquaintances gathered round them. She was at this time one of the most conspicuous figures at Monte Carlo. A Russian magnate was at her feet, and she was surrounded by a throng of admirers. To stake her coins at *roulette* was an eagerly coveted privilege. This critical year had at all events commenced favourably. Fortune smiled upon her play. The superstitious followed her lead; report magnified her winnings; and even the impassive countenances of the croupiers relaxed when she appeared at the tables. The dark, stern-faced Englishman who was to be seen constantly at her side, became an object of comment. His good fortune was identified with her favours. Outsiders, with a whimsical belief in the superstition which had become attached to her name, waited with curiosity till the critical moment should arrive when luck should turn and the Vampire's thirst be appeased. A tragedy was confidently predicted by the ghouls who scent disaster from afar. The absolute unconsciousness of both Warrender and Madame Fano was a fact not to be believed, and her composure was adduced as a proof of insensibility. Cazalette held aloof, never playing, but watching Varuna closely. Not less was his attention bestowed upon Warrender, whose society he now assiduously cultivated. The latter began to repent his first feeling of aversion. Apparently to no one could the term adventurer be less justly applied than to Cazalette. With the dignitaries of Church and State, English and foreign, he seemed equally at home. His circle of acquaintance was large and ranged the social scale. A charming ex-actress had taken a villa near Villefranche, and considered her informal entertainments failures without his presence. The Princess Balzani—who occupied a most luxurious suite of rooms at the Grand Hotel, and divided the honours of notoriety in Monaco with the *diva*, Madame Fano, a London professional beauty, and a fair but frail Communist lately returned from New Caledonia—patronised and petted him, and it was said, sought to lure him into the vortex of political intrigue. To be the friend of Caterina Balzani was perhaps a doubtful distinction. Yes! but to be the

associate of Père Hyacinthe, who was lecturing at Nice, of Monsignor ———, who under the Papal benediction had established himself for health's sake at Mentone, and of a great English statesman driven to seek distraction and repose on the Riviera, was a surer seal of respectability.

The faint suggestion of rivalry between Cazalette and himself in their relations with Madame Fano had completely faded from Warrender's mind. Had he analysed his feelings, this vague jealousy might have been a revelation, but in the conversation at Cap Martin she herself had removed it before it had had time to assume definite shape.

Notwithstanding the gaieties that made calls upon their time, there were many hours in which Warrender and Madame Fano found themselves companions. She seemed to seek rather than to avoid these opportunities, and told him with the sweetest frankness that his society did her good. Strange to say, as their intimacy increased, their talk flowed in more impersonal channels. It was not without motive that he thus directed it. Reference to himself usually led to the subject of Helena, and from this, without knowing why, he shrank with inexpressible repugnance. He winced at the sound of her name upon Varuna's lips, and dreaded her appearance mid surroundings which in the case of her sister did not now shock his sensibilities. For one of the strongest proofs of Varuna's witchery lay in her power to sway the mood of the moment in the minds of those with whom she came in contact, and of identifying, as it were, all outward incongruities with her own charming personality; so that though Warrender yearned to rescue her from influences which he felt to be contaminating, and associations incompatible with his ideal of womanhood, she yet inspired him with the firmest belief in her capacity for all that is most high and noble.

Chapter XI.

"TO LOVE, OR NOT TO LOVE?"

"How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to Heaven above
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?"

"I WONDER," said Madame Fano suddenly, after a dreamy pause during which her eyes had been fixed vacantly upon the distant sea, "whether science will ever enable us to understand the laws

of moral and spiritual attraction. It is a fine thing, no doubt, to have discovered the principle of gravitation; but what a much greater boon to mankind it would be, if some clever person succeeded in laying down a set of rules, founded upon exact knowledge, which should teach us why such and such a combination of circumstances, sentiments, qualities, should produce a given result upon the human organism! There must be a law to govern such combinations. Just as in chemistry certain elements will or will not amalgamate, so certain natures meeting are bound to do each other either good or harm. One never discovers which till too late. If one could be guided by the laws which undoubtedly operate in the invisible world, social intercourse would be delightfully simple and uncomplicated. There would be no unhappy marriages, no false or forced relationships, no need to grope by instinct after enlightenment. We should avoid what we know to be antipathetic, and cling without fear to those with whom we were in harmony."

Madame Fano uttered this long philosophical speculation slowly and thoughtfully, and apparently without any expectation of a reply. She laughed softly as she concluded.

"In relation to what?" asked Warrender.

They were sitting together in the garden of the Villa Kilsyth; the grounds were closed in by olives and pines, which seemed a barrier against the outer world. A soft breeze soughed gently through the branches overhead. A little thicket of orange-trees screened them from the house. These were at once in fruit and bloom, and filled the air with fragrance. A mimosa scattered its golden pollen at their feet. The sun lay low on the horizon. The olives cast mysterious shadows, and between their gnarled trunks there shone a tender after-glow. Faint echoes floated from the promenade, but here all was dreamy and still. Madame Fano leaned back in a cushioned basket-chair, beside her a little table upon which fruit and tea were laid. The scene had an air of homeliness and domesticity, refreshing after the garish accessories of an hotel. Varuna was pale, and there was something of languor in her mien. She complained of headache and fatigue; it was her first appearance downstairs that day, nevertheless when Warrender called, he had after a little delay been ushered hither into her presence. A volume of Browning was in his hand. Seeing her listlessness, he had proposed to read, and, choosing the poem, "Two in the Campagna," had watched her furtively to discover how deeply she was affected by it. A pause had followed the reading. Her remark broke the silence.

"To you, I suppose. You don't believe in the theory of corres-

pondences, and I feel too stupid at present to expound it. Nevertheless, our—" there was the slightest perceptible hesitation—"our friendship is an exemplification of what I mean."

Warrender leaned eagerly forward. The subtle passion of the poetry he had been reading still thrilled his nerves. He had seen that her lip trembled. There was a troubled moving of the spirits of both; each knew it, each felt the inward agitation.

"Does this touch you?" he asked, glancing down at the open page.

"Yes—but why love—why always love? I know 'the pain of finite hearts which yearn.' I have felt at times an almost maddening need of sympathy—when the darkness has closed suffocatingly round me and I have longed for a handclasp to assure me that I myself was not a ghost—not one of the evil spirits which seemed to press me on all sides. But this was not the mere womanly desire to be loved. There was plenty of that sort of thing in my life. It appeared to me only the most horrible mockery. You know—I have told you what I have suffered from that terrible feeling of blank desolation—of separateness from those who were talking and laughing around me. It was after my husband's death that I felt it most. I had impulses to torture—to kill—sometimes I wondered whether it was not I who had caused his death. I dared not be left alone with my child. There are things now belonging to that time which I have hidden away—which I cannot bear to look at. Play was the only means of escape from myself . . . then, just before you came, all those dreadful sensations came back. I felt certain that in time I should go mad. When I saw you, something within me made me sure that you would help me. I was so glad when you told me that you had wished to marry Helena. I am a different person now—I feel calmed and soothed. You have made me better—you have exorcised my demons."

Warrender rose and approached her chair, standing over her. "Madame Fano!" he exclaimed, his voice vibrating with earnestness, "you humble me to the dust, and at the same time you make me the proudest man in the world. How is it possible that *I* can have done this for you? It is your own beautiful soul which has spoken. There would be no demons to exorcise if you were but true to yourself."

"Or to your belief in me," she answered with a smile. "You put me on honour; perhaps there lies the secret of your influence." Suddenly, as a step sounded upon the gravel near, her tone changed to one of light raillery. "Unfortunately with you, Mr. Warrender, precept and example do not go hand in hand; you rebuke my

gambling propensities, and yet you encourage them by winning for me."

Colonel Cazelette appeared from behind the orange-trees. He had overheard the last words.

"Ah, madame," he said when he had made his greetings with his usual suave courtesy, "you worship Chance after the fashion of those tribes who sacrifice new-born infants upon the altar of their god. And talking of chance, have you heard that this morning the Polish plunger committed suicide in his rooms at the Grand Hotel? I have just seen the Princess Balzani. Report connects her with the catastrophe, and the Directors of the Tripot encourage the scandal. It is certain that *rouleaux* of gold were found in his pockets, and that the Princess has given orders for her removal to a villa close to Villefranche. Already the ghouls of the Casino have rifled the body; and I overheard a certain lady congratulating herself upon having secured a lock of the dead man's hair as a talisman against ill-fortune."

Warrender uttered an exclamation of disgust. "Are such tragedies as this common occurrences here?"

Cazalette gathered a bunch of mimosa and coolly inhaled its fragrance. "Wherever life is at its highest pressure, there is bound to be tragedy. Perhaps, considering the combination of forces, one finds less here than might reasonably be expected—or else one does not hear of it. The newspapers are bought. Even editors can be gagged with bank-notes. Tragedies! of course there are tragedies. Where the carcase is, there the eagles gather together. Pack humanity closely and you may predict the result. What about your London Bridge suicides, and the revelations of your police courts? The stage is larger, that is all. Where but here, do you see, in an area of a few square yards, all the passions brought into play under such varied and complex conditions! I take the world as I find it, Mr. Warrender, and make the best of its resources. It seems to me that certain safety-valves for what you may be pleased to term vice, are an absolute necessity to the working of human machinery. Sewers and cesspools may be foul in themselves, but they tend to preserve health. From that point of view I don't join in the clamour for the suppression of Monte Carlo. It's the vulgarity of an exhibition of this kind that is revolting. Refined superstition is not offensive—such as yours, madame. Yet in the abstract? . . . A dead man's hair—a living man's heart—?"

He paused, seeming to await Varuna's reply. His words might have been resented as insolent, but his tone was dulcet, his air deferential, and expressive of benevolent inquiry. Warrender turned pale and would have replied, but was checked by a look from

Varuna. Her eyes flashed, she rose from her chair; but the sight of Cazalette's imperturbable face seemed to turn the edge of her anger. She merely smiled in the slow, scornful manner which had not been so habitual with her of late, and sank back again. Cazalette continued with bland indifference. "If all gamblers possessed, like Madame Fano, the art of infusing poetry into *roulette*! She is a queen who receives allegiance and owes none."

"In that case," rejoined Varuna, "I have no hesitation in dismissing Mr. Warrender before reverses test his fidelity. Our compact of friendship holds good, but some one else shall stake for me in future."

Warrender's eyes sought hers in a glance of troubled appeal. At that instant a servant approached bearing a telegram, which he handed to Madame Fano. She opened it; her cheek flushed slightly, and she looked up with sparkling eyes, addressing Warrender.

"This is good news—at last! My sister has left Paris. She will arrive this evening."

She was startled by the change in his face. The slow-gathering cloud of weeks had burst suddenly. Like a flash of lightning truth illuminated his soul. He saw his passion in all its bareness. Oh, blind fool that he had been! The shock was horrible. It was as though he had suddenly discovered himself to be a traitor. He had a longing to escape, to be in solitude. He dared not look at Varuna, for instinctively he felt that she had read his secret. He stood, dazed, at the moment hardly aware that she was speaking.

"Mr. Warrender, I wonder if it would trouble you to find my mother, and give her this telegram. She is either in the Casino or the Hôtel des Anges, and it would be well that she should hear of Helena's arrival before committing herself to any arrangements for the evening."

Warrender took the telegram, and in a voice which he vainly strove to command, declared his willingness to do Madame Fano's bidding.

Varuna and Cazalette were left alone.

Chapter XII.

A LOVER DISMISSED.

Cazalette stood intently observing Madame Fano, while she, with eyes drooped, remained motionless, as though preoccupied with thought. Presently he said with a tremor of tenderness in his tone "I am sorry to see you looking so ill."

She glanced up, and their eyes met. Recalled to the present, her composure vanished. Her cheeks became flushed; her voice faltered.

"I—I am not very well. My head still aches. There is thunder I think, in the air."

"You will not go to the station to meet your sister?"

"No."

"You told me not long ago that Mr. Warrender wished to marry Miss Kilsyth. Are you still of the same opinion?"

"I have had no reason to change it" she replied.

There was a pause. Cazalette seated himself upon the chair which Warrender had occupied a short time before.

"Madame Fano," he said seriously, "we are—if you dislike the term old friends—at least old acquaintances. Will you listen kindly to me for a few moments?"

His tone touched Varuna, or perhaps she was hardly yet herself, for she answered with a sweetness which was in marked contrast to the stiffness and coldness of her usual manner to him.

"That is a small favour, and one which I can readily grant in return for those which you have done me in former days."

"It gives me happiness to think that your recollections of me are not entirely harsh. How you have altered! I don't know whether the change has been greatest during the five years of my absence, or in the three weeks that have passed since my return."

"Of course you find me altered. I had gone through so much in those days; my health was broken."

"When we parted, you had endured a terrible shock. You were unnerved, your spirits were shattered. For months afterwards my heart ached when I thought of you. It was pity for you which made me leave you. Often I have felt that it would have been kinder to us both had I remained."

"No," she interrupted haughtily, "I bade you go; and you acted wisely in obeying me. Why should you have wasted any more of your life in following a shadow?"

"The shadow might have turned to reality. Your dislike to me was unreasonable. I ought to have heeded it no more than one heeds the anger of a child. I would have been your devoted friend. I would have so guarded and shielded you, that in time you would have become dependent upon me. Tired, bruised, aching, your heart, instead of rejecting all love, would at last have turned to the one heart which must always be faithful!"

She shook her head.

"You are not so cold or so strong as you would have the world believe," continued Cazalette. "You have *some* womanly weaknesses. Are they weaknesses? It is they which make you adorable. For five years you have done nothing but cause men misery; and now you yearn—yes, I see it in your eyes—you yearn to give and receive happiness. Ah, Varuna, am I so unworthy? Have I not loved you long enough and well enough? Why is it that I, who have always had so strong an influence upon women, should have utterly failed to move you?"

"It is strange," said Varuna absently. "Perhaps if at first you had taken less pains to seem sincere, I might have believed in you."

"At least," exclaimed Cazalette bitterly, "you cannot accuse me of insincerity to you. I am called a Jesuit. It is said of me that I am all things to all men in order to serve my own purposes. That may be in part true. One despises one's fellow-creatures, but it is interesting to experimentalise upon them."

Varuna's eyes darkened and dilated. "And you experimentalised upon me, and found me so far unlike many miserable wives, that though my position laid me open to insult, I had too much self-respect to submit to it."

"Varuna, I swear that you wrong me. Had I not loved you chivalrously and devotedly from the time that you came a girl to Nice? Did I not treat you after your marriage with the most scrupulous deference? Was it not my object to shield you from slights, and to spare you suffering?"

"Yes," she answered slowly. "It is because I remember those kindnesses that I am listening now."

"For ten years," he continued passionately, "you have been the pivot upon which my very existence has turned. To say that I have sometimes sunk to the level of low pleasures is to say only that I am a man. The truest, best side of my nature has always been turned to you. My love has never insulted you. Even in that hour of madness with which you reproach me, I had no disloyal thoughts. Could I stand by and see your wretchedness increasing daily, and not long to snatch you from a life which degraded you? There was no other way, and I fancied that you, like myself, were above conventional prudery. Great God! what could have induced you to marry that man? I confess that you baffle me completely. You have always been a mystery which I have tried in vain to solve."

She shuddered. He saw his advantage, but forbore to press it. After a short silence she spoke in a hurried, agitated manner:

"You say that I have always been a mystery to you. I am a

greater mystery to myself. I don't know what made me marry—all sorts of influences and moods which I can't explain. It has seemed to me sometimes that malicious fiends were leading me on, and mocking at what I fancied my independence. I hated being made love to—even then. There was something in it against which my soul revolted. I preferred being coerced. You are right—I am not strong. I am pitiably, deplorably weak. There are people who can make me do what they choose. There are temptations which I cannot resist. It is because I am afraid of these powers that I try to be hard. Monsieur Fano had a certain influence over me. I think it possible that he may have magnetised me. Such things are. Very soon, my submission turned to hatred, but at first I did as he pleased. That is the only explanation I can give: it is all a mystery. I have often wondered that you did not make me love you. That too is a mystery. But it is true that from the first you repelled me. I cannot account for it; but I liked, young as I was, to imagine myself clear-sighted, and your manner to my mother made me distrust you. I saw that you seemed what you were not, in order to gain her to your interests. You played upon her follies, and humoured her superstition, till she became afraid of you. She is afraid of you still; but it is difficult to understand what object you can have now in view."

Cazalette left his seat, and slowly paced the lawn as though he were considering in what manner he should reply. Varuna rose also. Her vehemence had subsided, or only showed itself in the rapidity with which she broke off the downy balls of a plume of mimosa that she held in her hand.

Presently Cazalette paused, and fixing his eyes steadily on her, said sadly:

"Since you are susceptible to such influences, I wish that I had the power of magnetising you. Other women have found my eyes mesmeric, yours defy them. I would gladly, if I could, make you submit to me now, run the risk of your hating me afterwards; *I know* that once you were my own, your heart would be softened by my devotion. Varuna," and his voice changed to one of ardent appeal. "After ten years of patient servitude must I go away unrewarded and desolate? I have poured out upon you all the love of which human nature is capable, must I give you to a man who a few weeks ago swore undying devotion to your sister?"

Varuna flushed to the brow, but met his gaze unflinchingly.

"This is more than I will bear," she exclaimed indignantly. "I won't pretend to misunderstand you, but I must beg for the last time that you will make no further allusion of this kind to Mr.

Warrender. Think what you please. Time will prove that there can be such a thing as friendship between a woman and a man who is not her lover."

"Surely your experience contradicts that theory. Impossible in the case of such a woman as yourself."

"You asked me to hear what you had to say," she replied coldly—"I have listened for some time patiently. Nothing can be gained by continuing this subject. You have talked so wildly, Colonel Cazalette, that I hardly know how to answer you. I ought to express myself grateful for your regard, touched by your constancy. I am grateful, and I am deeply sorry that so much which another woman might have valued and repaid, has been wasted on me. During all these years, I have never had one warm impulse towards you. At times I have shrunk from you with an unaccountable dislike. This seems a hard thing to say now, but I want you to understand that what you wish is impossible. Put me out of your life. You must have many interests apart from this one. There are women in the world, young, beautiful and innocent, well worth the winning. Go away from Monte Carlo and forget this dream. Make a career for yourself in which your talents will have full play. Choose a wife whom you can mould to your own fancy, and leave us—my mother and me. We have brought you no good, and you have only done us harm. Let us go our different ways; we act fatally upon each other."

There was a note of almost affectionate appeal in Varuna's voice. Her whole face was softened; her gaze entreated wistfully. Cazalette's eyes grew larger with repressed tears; his firm lip twitched; and he turned away so that she might not see the struggle with which he bade farewell to the hope that for ten years had ruled his thoughts and actions.

"Colonel Cazalette," continued Varuna with the same gentleness, "if I seem cold and ungracious, forgive me, and let us say good-bye without ill-will. I have misjudged you perhaps; forgive me this too, and try to remember that any faith I once had in purity of heart and sincerity of motive has been beaten out of me. You know what a hard experience I have had. Life seems to me at most times a sickening farce, in which all are seeking after vanity, self-interest, sensuality. My eyes are distorted, and I see only what is bad. It may be that there is little or no good: it may be that I have not the power of discerning it. She turned away and walked hurriedly a few paces, then pausing continued speaking with an impetuosity which he had rarely seen in her:

"Do you know that weird story of George Eliot's which I was reading the other day? I sometimes fancy that I have that fatal

capacity—inward vision—of second sight, to which all coarse, mean, ignoble thoughts are laid hideously bare. If it were otherwise, I might be more responsive—more ready to believe in your protestations. As it is, I must say the truth—that they do not touch me. I don't understand the sort of feeling you have for me—or perhaps I understand it, in a man of your type, too well. There would have been the same glamour about Mademoiselle Coradella had she been unattainable."

He interrupted her with a passionate ejaculation.

"I am hard—I am cynical—I am unwomanly," rejoined Varuna. "Yes, yes. I know and admit all this. Why should *I* taunt you? Why should *I* accuse you of falsity who am utterly false myself? But these are all words, Colonel Cazalette, as empty as air. Let us have done with the subject of love; it is hateful to me. If you would do me a last kindness, leave Monte Carlo. Your presence here is a pain to me: it has a most baleful effect upon my mother. You must have observed this; others remark it and wonder. What can I think but that you have some hold over her to which I do not possess the clue. My poor mother is nervous and excitable; her mind is quite unbalanced; it is cowardly—it is cruel to make her your tool. We are both weak and defenceless. I know, as you do, the taint which we have inherited, and which poisons our lives. I trace it in her and in myself. I am prepared to trace it in Helena. Your influence intensifies the rest. I don't want to know your secrets or your schemes, but they are surely objectless now. Leave us. What attraction has this spot for you? You don't play. Would you not find Paris as amusing as Monte Carlo?"

Cazalette stood with face averted. A sound, half imprecation half groan, escaped his lips; but he made no other reply to Varuna's appeal.

"Will you go?" she asked impatiently.

He turned towards her. The mask had been reassumed; his features exhibited no trace of agitation. All softness had gone from his eyes, and with a sort of metallic glitter they seemed to mock at her earnestness.

"Madame Fano," he said quietly, "you are right, and I accept your dismissal. I have wasted too many years in dreaming sweet impossibilities. I see now that it needs fire from heaven to melt an iceberg. I give up the attempt to work a miracle!"

"Then you will go!" she exclaimed, in accents of relief.

"Are you quite wise," he asked, with a curious smile, "to show your anxiety so plainly? It tells me that you have some

stronger feeling towards me than indifference. To know that you fear me is a temptation to revenge."

"Fear! Revenge!" she repeated with disdain. "We are not acting Mrs. Featherstone's melodrama. It is for the sake of my mother's peace of mind that I beg you to leave us."

"You ask a great deal of me, Madame Fano; more than I am prepared to grant. Tenacity of purpose is one of my chief characteristics, I think. I, too, have my superstitions concerning time and place, omens, combinations of circumstances, and so forth. It was not by accident that I arrived here on New Year's Eve. I have a conviction that this year will be fateful to me as well as to you. I came with two plans of action mapped in my mind, resolved, should one fail, that I would carry out the other. To leave Monte Carlo now would be to give up this project also; and I should be stranded upon the world without aim or hope."

He waited as if expecting some comment. Madame Fano kept silence; he continued:

"I am going to be frank with you. My first object in coming here was to see you once more—to make one last effort to win you. I love you so madly, that to gain you for my wife upon any terms is to me worth the sacrifice of every other ambition. You have convinced me of the uselessness of striving after the unattainable. The supreme good is denied me. I must patch up my life with the shreds of happiness that are left. In these days a man cannot obtain a bride by force, and notwithstanding my passion, I am philosopher enough to make the best of my position. Dear Madame Fano, your advice is good. I am not yet too old to carve out a career; but I want money and an assured social position, by which to back up the influence in certain high quarters that I already possess. These I can gain most easily by marriage with—say an English lady—a Catholic, beautiful, rich, and well connected. All these advantages are combined in the person of Miss Kilsyth. You will understand why I am unwilling to leave Monte Carlo—at present."

Varuna started violently, raising her arms with a gesture of indignant scorn.

"You must be mad," she exclaimed—"mad to imagine such a scheme—and, if you have the smallest hope of its success, to tell it to me!"

"Why?"

"Because I would rather see my sister in her grave than married to you. But I do not fear you, Colonel Cazalette; and if I were inclined to dread your gaining an influence over Helena, your candour, or shall I say your vanity, has forearmed me."

"Again you wrong me. I approach Miss Kilsyth in the deepest humility, and my hope of success is not based on confidence in my own power of attraction, but upon a supposition which I shall soon be able to put to the test. Human motives are very complex, Madame Fano, and love an uncertain force of which the workings cannot be predicted."

So saying, and not trusting himself to utter any conventional leavetaking, Cazalette quitted Madame Fano's presence and entered the villa.

Chapter XIII.

EDELWEISS.

Mrs. Kilsyth stood before a Venetian mirror that hung above the fireplace in the hall abstractedly gazing at her own image. She was in walking costume, and Cazalette observed that she was dressed with exceptional care. Her usual somewhat wild look was subdued by an expression of tender expectancy; and with that becoming drapery of black lace crowning her smoothy braided hair, and setting off the fine poise of her head, she was a woman whom to remark could only be to admire.

"I am waiting for you," she said. "How have you left Varuna?"

"At the end of the third act, in a situation which promises to be highly dramatic," he rejoined with bitter hilarity. Madame Fano is in the garden. She is tired, unfit to welcome her sister. I am going down with you to the station. But the *rapide* is not due for three-quarters-of-an-hour yet.

Mrs. Kilsyth sank upon a lounge. Her breast heaved. She showed symptoms of agitation.

"Oscar," she said, looking up at him in a helpless, pathetic way. "You warned me yesterday that I was in your power, and I promised to obey you. You did not wish to alarm me. It was only flourishing the whip before a high-spirited child. Yes, I know that your motives are always excellent, and you have educated my moral sense. I am afraid that I was a little deficient in old days. The road to heaven lies sometimes through garbage, and you have taught me that there are crises, occasions upon which we must shut our eyes, and strike—instruments for God. That is the philosophical *raison d'être* of impulsive creatures like me. But neither for the Church, nor for you, will I be an instrument for evil to my children. There's a tigress spirit within me that can be goaded to frenzy by a blow aimed at the helpless. You will

win Helena's love, you say—I am ready to help you; but if I thought that you would ever treat her as Fano treated my unfortunate Varuna I——"

"You would poison me," said Cazalette coldly. "But amateur photography is not so fashionable as it was a few years ago, and I am not in the habit of taking night draughts. I think that I may venture upon the risk. During the ten years in which you have known me, have I given you no opportunity of testing my goodness of heart?"

"Yes, yes, forgive me; but I cannot understand you."

"Do not try."

"You once loved Varuna; and she is not a woman to be forgotten."

"Or to forget. Listen; this is the situation. Varuna loves George Warrender, who is divided between an old affection for Helena, and a new-born infatuation for her sister. You have mourned bitterly over Madame Fano's broken life. Do you wish to make her happy?"

"Oh, my poor Varuna!" cried Mrs. Kilsyth, the tears streaming from her eyes. "Would I not for her sake sacrifice my own soul? Tell me what I can do?"

"Marry her to the man she loves. I suspect Helena of a girlish fancy for this all-conquering Englishman, which was rooted out at the command of her confessor. It could not have struck deep, or she would have been less pliable. Do you not see that such a fancy reviving now, or becoming known to its object, might jeopardise Varuna's future, whereas if Helena's heart, caught on the rebound, can be transferred to my keeping, the happiness of five people, yourself included, is secured, and a great property is not alienated from the Church? Do I make myself clear?"

Mrs. Kilsyth started from her seat, her face beaming. "Perfectly! How could I ever have mistrusted you? What insight you have! Ah," she added naively, "what is to become of me? I must turn moral, virtuous and domestic too! It would never do for me to stay here without Varuna to keep me in check. I should be pawning the remains of my jewellery, and starving in a garret at the Hôtel de Paris."

Cazalette smiled upon her as though she had been a child. "I will take care of you. Come, we have still half-an-hour to spare. Let us go into the Casino, and see whether you are in luck this evening?"

"But you must lend me a few hundred francs. I am under orders. Varuna has locked up my money. She has been reading me a lecture as long as my arm. It chimed with my feelings. I have

been in very low spirits. I hide beneath a mask of smiles the griefs that gnaw me—and all for a few paltry louis!"

"I shall have great pleasure in supplying them—a small item added to the large debt which you will repay on the day that I become your son-in-law."

Mrs. Kilsyth adjusted her bonnet, and again looked at herself in the mirror.

"It is unnecessary," said Cazalette. "You are handsome enough to win harder hearts than that of a girl. "Give up gambling, and chloral, and you will wear as well as Ninon de l'Enclos."

They left the villa together.

The sun was setting. There was something mysterious and fantastic in the mingling of deep shadow and golden haze. In the east, clouds lay heavily piled, violet blending with rose, but to the westward the Tête du Chien frowned gloomily, with only a white gleam striking the edge of its bald precipice.

Varuna had not yet left the garden. She sat, her elbows resting upon the arm of her chair, her face buried in her hands. The *rapide* was steaming from Nice. This fact was dominant; her very heart seemed to throb with the engine's pulsations. Helena was speeding towards Monaco. Helena whom Warrender had sought for his wife.

For her too this was the hour of revelation. She had seen and had measured at less than its value the struggling passion in Warrender's face. A strange tumult of scorn and ecstasy filled her being. Was he then no stronger than men whom she despised—slaves to the intoxication of her beauty, and to the influences of the hour? And yet—to her, he stood apart from all the world. He might command, and she would obey. For the first time in her life she knew that resistless craving which can only be appeased by love. The sense of loneliness and desolation deepened till it became despair. Her dream of friendship, the close, innocent intercourse of these short weeks—ah, how long they seemed!—had faded like a mirage, and she stood solitary and thirsting in the desert. Tears gushed from her eyes. Her frame shook with deep-drawn sobs. "Holy Mother, help me!" she murmured. Then she raised her eyes, the lashes still beaded, and her lips quivered like those of a child. Maidenly consciousness and wistful yearning transfigured the pale face. "I can never say again that I don't know"—she whispered brokenly to herself—"They can't call me a marble statue any longer. Darling,"and her voice lingered with ineffable tenderness upon the word, "you have taught me to love."

There was a footstep on the lawn, a rustle among the mimosa

branches, and Varuna half rose, and then sank back again, trembling and confused. Warrender was beside her.

For some seconds he stood still; and she said not a word, nor did she dare lift her eyes to his. But the magnetism of love drew their souls together, and all the world seemed still around them, save for the fast beating of the hearts of both.

The evening glow glorified her beauty, and his senses were stirred to passion pitch. The image of that fair saint still enshrined in the sanctuary of his being, faded in the presence of this near, breathing enchantress whose cold reserve none but he had ever broken. And she was his own. Her deep blush, her veiled eyes, her attitude of expectancy and abandonment, told more than words could have expressed. She half bent with head turned away. One arm was thrown over the back of her chair, the other uplifted left displayed the rounded outlines of her bust and waist. He could see her bosom rise and fall beneath the lace kerchief which was knotted round her shoulders. Here was no shy girl fluttered by the first thrill of love, but a woman, whose nature, matured and dignified by the experience of suffering, was ready to yield without coyness or protest the sweetness which no man had ever tasted.

He knelt by her side. Gently, almost reverentially, he touched her arm, and drawing it down clasped her hand in his.

"You know that I love you," he said very low.

Varuna turned, and reed-like swayed towards him. Their eyes met and clung to each other, in each the heart speaking. Her eyes beamed with a soft radiance such as Warrender had never yet beheld. An imperious voice within her seemed to cry, "Give, give." This was the overmastering impulse—to lay at his feet her crown of coldness and pride, exulting in the consciousness that to no other had it been proffered. Kneeling, he clasped her to his breast, and they kissed as lovers to whom this rapture of contact has with its strangeness and newness a deep solemnity . . . . The faint sound of voices from the villa, caused Varuna to start guiltily from his embrace.

"We have been dreaming," she said in agitated tones. "All this must be forgotten."

"Forgotten!" he repeated. "It will be remembered with joy to my dying day! You love one; is not that blessed glorious reality?"

"My sister has come. This—this is the madness of an hour. To-morrow you will know that you have deceived yourself."

He placed her hands against his breast. His eyes glowed on hers, and there poured from his lips a torrent of passionate entreaty, protestation, vindication of inconstancy.

Chapter XIV.

MISS KILSYTH ARRIVES.

Cazalette and Mrs. Kilsyth proceeded to the Casino, where she, acting upon the inspiration of the moment, staked, won, lost, and finally left the gaming-room richer by a few gold pieces and in correspondingly high spirits.

They lingered for a few moments on the terrace. Warrender passed them, on his way from the Condamine. He merely raised his hat and went on in the direction of the Villa Kilsyth.

"He will find Varuna alone," remarked Mrs. Kilsyth, "and the old tale will be told again. Did you remark the sympathy there was to-day between the tables? One might make that the basis of a system. Well," she added sighing, "to-morrow is a saint's day—one must have a holiday sometimes, and I will work out a system at home."

Shortly after they reached the station, the train steamed slowly in, and began to disgorge its gambling complement from Nice—equivocal English of the gentler sex, and still more pronounced-looking Frenchwomen, in large hats and ungracefully fashioned garments for the most part, tawdrily fine, with a profusion of paste ornaments or with dingy gold pins confining ill-combed tresses. These were all gesticulating and chattering as only Frenchwomen and magpies can chatter; while men of the black-browed, greasy-complexioned continental type, shabbily dressed, vulgar and dirty, with watery eyes and tottering gait; sensual-looking Germans, unctuous Russians, and here and there a sallow Pole, elbowed each other in the general rush towards the flight of steps which leads to the gardens of the Casino.

Mrs. Kilsyth walked eagerly along the line of carriages. She was pale from excitement, and could hardly control her agitation. Cazalette, with more presence of mind, had already opened the door of a *coupé* in the rear, and was helping a tall young lady in black, followed by an elderly maid, to alight.

Helena stood for a moment irresolutely upon the platform. She looked tired and bewildered, and there was a faint expression of disgust upon her features as she surveyed the crowd around her. Then recognising her mother, she advanced and was received in a tender embrace.

"Mother!" the young girl whispered passionately.

The meeting was too momentous for many words. "My darling!" murmured the elder woman. Then the two stood apart and surveyed each other, their eyes shining through tears of joy.

"How beautiful you are, Helena!" said Mrs. Kilsyth.

"And you too, mamma. I like your black lace and your foreign look," rejoined Helena with a little hysterical laugh. "What a handsome trio we shall make! Where is Varuna?"

"She is not quite well; we shall be with her in a few moments."

"Is her chest delicate? Do you live here on her account?"

"No, my love, to both questions. I live at Monte Carlo—simply because it is the most amusing place in Europe, and both Varuna and I have gone through so much that our systems require a certain amount of stimulus. Helena, some people come here to make a living; others because it is a much finer air than Cannes or Nice—oh ever so much—so the doctors say; others to hear the music," continued Mrs. Kilsyth with wistful gravity. "We are strangers, my dearest. You have been brought up among the Philistines; and I—belong to the tribes of the wilderness. You have been taught perhaps to think ill of me. Say now that you believe in my love for you, and in my wish to influence you only for your own happiness."

"Mother," replied the girl sadly, "you have been cruelly treated. We have both been dealt with unjustly. Neither father nor guardian has a right to separate mother and daughter. But all that is past. My home is henceforth with you; Uncle John's death is a great grief. I have always been grateful to him for his kindness, and I tried to make him love me. But how can I help thanking our Blessed Lady for giving me back to you?"

Mrs. Kilsyth kissed her daughter's hand with one of those impulsive gestures which made her still seem youthful. "You make me happy, dearest. I am a foolish old mother, and Varuna is my tyrant. Come, she will be impatient, unless," with a glance at Cazalette, "she has been too well engaged to hear the arrival of the train. My love, this is Colonel Cazalette, my best friend. You must like him for my sake."

Helena thought, but had not sufficient self-possession to say, that it would not be difficult to like him for his own sake. His face reminded her of a painting of one of the saints which hung in her oratory at home.

Villa Kilsyth was but a little distance from the station, and it was Cazalette who suggested that Helena would probably be less tired by a short walk through the Casino gardens than by the longer drive along a dusty road.

She acceded to the proposition, and thanked him with the touch of gravity which he had already observed in all her words and actions. Mrs. Kilsyth linked her daughter's arm within her own and proceeded to ask questions concerning the journey while in

her staccato manner she pointed out the objects of interest, and commented upon the various persons who passed them, most of whom directed curious glances at the beautiful English girl.

"There goes a gentleman of unblemished honour. There are a great many of those immaculate beings here — says he has a system which only requires a capital of one hundred and fifty louis, and if any one is fool enough to give him that, he promises thirty louis a day and proposes to pocket the rest of the winnings. He came to me. 'No, thank you,' I said. 'I have had too much of systems, and can lose my own money without giving it to other people to lose for me.'"

"Mother," said Helena, hesitating slightly, "do you play much?"

"My love, it is my only extravagance, the one form of excitement necessary to my existence."

Helena sighed. The enthusiasm with which she had so ardently looked forward to this meeting had partially faded, and was replaced by a feeling of blankness. She could have fancied that she was walking in a dream. Even Cazalette's sympathetic glance, which she encountered upon turning her head, did not at once convince her that the dream was reality.

The plunge into her new surroundings, from the strict conventional atmosphere in which she had passed her life, was sudden, and bewildered her faculties. Sir John Kilsyth, from a scruple of loyalty, had refrained from enlightening Helena as to her mother's peculiarities, and she had merely gleaned that Monte Carlo was a somewhat undesirable place of residence, and Mrs. Kilsyth's love of gambling a weakness to be deprecated. But the motley crowd at the railway station, a stray conversation which she had overheard in the train, something indefinable in the associations and moral air of the place, had produced in her a sense of doubt and vague repulsion. And this was hardly now dispelled by a fond whisper from her mother, as they paused at the gate of the villa, to admire the view of curving bay and rock-bound promontory which spread itself before their eyes.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Helena.

"You know the legend?" observed Cazalette, pointing across the misty sea.

"Ah!" briskly said Mrs. Kilsyth. "I wonder how many out of the crowd here know anything about the legend of St. Dévote, or care an iota for the beauty of the scenery? Helena, dearest, you must forget your copy-books and primers, your platitudes and prejudices. The deep undercurrent of education flows steadiest at Monte Carlo. I have been all over Europe. I have

seen cities, palaces, society; but the pulse of humanity beats strongest here."

She opened the little gate, and smiling, yet tearful, stood under the shadow of a palm-tree with arms outstretched to Helena.

"Welcome, daughter of the Philistines."

Cazalette made a step in advance, then stopped and raised his hat. "Good-bye, Miss Kilsyth. I hope that you will rest well after your journey."

"You are not going?" cried the elder lady. "No, I insist that you stay and dine with us. Mrs. Featherstone and Lord Bretland have promised to look in on their way to the Casino to be introduced to Helena. See what a foolish mother I am! I must needs exhibit my beautiful daughter already! Dearest, call me a wretch! I deserve it! You have been travelling for twenty-four hours! If you wish it, you shall remain in your room."

"I am not tired," answered Helena. "I slept through the night; and—oh, mother, let us go at once to Varuna."

They entered the drawing-room, Cazalette following. It was silent and empty. Mrs. Kilsyth softly called Madame Fano's name, but there was no reply.

"She must be in the library, and has probably been listening for the sound of carriage-wheels," said Mrs. Kilsyth. "I will go and find her."

But she paused at the door, returned, then taking off Helena's hat and mantle, drew back a few steps and gazed at the young girl with eyes of fond admiration.

Released from her wraps, Helena stood forth, slender as a lily, but with a stateliness of carriage which partly counteracted the impresssion she gave of delicacy and immaturity.

Cazalette also observed and mentally appraised her.

Her beauty, of a different type, was as undeniable as that of her sister. Here, he decided, were no subtle and complex impulses to be contended against. The grey eyes shone clearly as those of a child; the oval contour of chin and cheek, and the soft full lips were Madonna-like in their womanly sweetness. For the rest, her appearance had all the frank innocence and natural dignity, blended curiously with an air of fashion, which distinguish a certain type of English girl. Her auburn hair was coiled smoothly at the nape of her neck, a few tendrils curling upon her forehead. Her smile had a tender gravity, and her complexion was of the rose-leaf purity which accompanies this particular shade of hair. It was evident that her dress owed its costly simplicity to the skill of an artist, and all its accessories, to her long gloves and the carved handle of her parasol, were dainty to fineness.

"There is nothing of the Bohemian element here," said Mrs. Kilsyth in a tone of playful regret, looking towards Cazalette as she spoke. "Well, so much the better, her sorrows will be the fewer. And now," she added with an involuntary sigh, "I will seek for my poor Varuna."

She left the room. Cazalette threw open the venetian shutters, which had been partially closed, and addressed Helena:

"You find yourself in a new world, Miss Kilsyth."

"Yes," replied Helena in an absent manner. She looked up suddenly and scanned his face with the inquiring, faintly beseeching gaze that a dog might bestow upon a new master. "You are my mother's friend," she said abruptly. "Why does she speak of my sister in so sad a way?"

"Madame Fano is to be pitied. Her lot has been unhappy. She made an unfortunate marriage."

"But that is past. She is beautiful, admired, loved. Her life may be sorrowful, but it should now be painless. I ask because,"—Helena hesitated, then continued in a tone of child-like appeal,—"I am a stranger here. I know nothing about gambling. Is it —is this place so very terrible? I am confused, a little troubled. Two ladies got into my carriage at Nice. They began to speak of Monte Carlo, and then of Madame Fano. Why do they call her the Vampire?"

"What!—already gossip has found its way to your ears? Do not heed what the world says, Miss Kilsyth; it is pitiless, jealous, and eager to calumniate. Your sister is a beautiful woman, and has the art of fascinating unconsciously. Well, there is a saying in Monte Carlo that to play for Madame Fano is fatal. The man who does so is invariably lucky; the superstitious will double their stakes when a new aspirant puts down her louis, but his doom, in popular opinion, is sealed."

Helena gazed at him with bewildered eyes.

"A vampire subsists upon the heart's blood of its victims," said Cazalette. "Madame Fano, however, charms without effort or motive. No woman has had a greater number of lovers, yet not one of those can boast of anything but coldness in return for his devotion; in two cases, his life."

Varuna shuddered.

"I frighten you by my stage talk. There's a tendency towards melodrama in Monte Carlo, as you may observe. Vampires don't exist in real life, Miss Kilsyth, nor do men usually die for love. Take my advice, think no more of any disagreeable remarks you may have overheard. Your mother has evidently not been successful in her search. Perhaps I may be more fortunate. I left

Madame Fano seated yonder, behind the orange-trees. The evening is so mild that she may be lingering there still, ignorant of your arrival. Shall we surprise her?"

He stepped over the threshold, and seemed to wait for Helena to follow him. She hesitated a moment, then walked by his side across the lawn. Their footsteps fell noiselessly upon the turf. By a premeditated turn Cazalette, halting, placed Helena at an angle whence unseen she might command a full view of the leafy embrasure. He himself remained in the rear and waited, while the girl, softly murmuring "Varuna," advanced with timid eagerness.

But her movement was suddenly arrested by the discovery that Madame Fano was not alone. Her heart stood still, the blood forsook her lips and cheeks. If a short time ago she had fancied herself in a dream, how much more so now when her girlish faith seemed shattered, and the foundations of the world loosened. But this dream was a nightmare. Neither her mother nor her sister had informed her that Warrender was at Monte Carlo. Only a few hours before, while half slumbering in her corner of the railway carriage, her imagination had pictured him in some wild spot, striving in vain to banish her image by the pursuit of science or adventure. She had smiled in fancy at the futility of such effort, so confident had she felt of his love. She had rejected him; but then, this unreasonable, enthusiastic girl believed in constancy, in the power of religion and the possibilities of the future, and had dreamed a sweet dream of happiness won after years perhaps of probation. . . . At this moment—but a few short months since he had besought her love—she beheld him, and he held Varuna's hands clasped in his, and his eyes were fastened upon Varuna's face—ah, surely she did not look cold or disdainful now—his gaze, his attitude, expressive of the most passionate ardour, while words of devotion fell brokenly from his lips.

Helena was brave. She uttered no cry, made no gesture of anguish or dismay. For a moment she stood as though petrified then swiftly turned and, white as death, faced Cazalette.

He had awaited with anxiety the result of his manœuvre. From it he expected to gain some insight into her character, and the means he might best employ for the end at which he aimed.

"Something has startled you," he said; "what is it? These shadows are deceptive. I was mistaken, Madame Fano has gone in."

"No, my sister is there." Helena was shocked at the hollowness of her voice, and made an effort to resume her usual tone. "But she is talking to a gentleman I know—whom I did not expect to meet here. I will not interrupt them now."

And passing him she re-entered the drawing-room.

"Poor child!" murmured Cazalette. "My first estimate was an incorrect one. That helpless face hides a brave spirit. She can sacrifice herself to a chimera, and repress a cry at finding the man she loves faithless. I can feel for her to-day. Good God! And there are fools who sneer at heroism and love!"

The irony of the position seemed to touch his sense of humour. He laughed grimly, took out a cigarette and, as he lighted it, softly hummed an air from the garden scene in 'Faust.'

His voice recalled the lovers to the world. Varuna withdrew her hand from Warrender's clasp.

"I will write," she said agitatedly. "They have come back. My sister is here, we must go in."

He hesitated.

"Come," she repeated imperiously. Her eyes searched his very soul. In a tone of the deepest sadness she added, "Which of us is it that you love? Do you shrink from the test already?"

"Varuna!" he cried. But she turned away, and with a self-possession at which he marvelled, lightly caught up the refrain of Cazalette's song.

She acted well, but Cazalette excelled her. He removed his cigarette as she approached and apologised for his reappearance in a manner admirably conventional.

The three, each inwardly torn, each taking part in the game of dissimulation and bandying commonplaces from one to the other, lingered for a few moments upon the lawn. Within, new voices sounded. Lamps had been brought in, though the jalousies remained open, and the drawing-room presented a scene of animation.

Mrs. Featherstone, charmingly dressed and attended by Lord Bretland and a rival adorer—blond, sunburnt, moustachioed, of the type which is involuntarily associated with a November day and a damp covert side—was vivaciously recounting her experiences at a reception from which she had just returned. Mrs. Kilsyth, one hand caressing that of Helena, listened, smiling and deeply interested, and apparently oblivious for the moment of the existence of her elder daughter. Lord Bretland was languidly and ineffectively interrogating Helena upon the state of the weather in England, while the latter stood against the mantelpiece, mute and almost as motionless as a statue. Mrs. Featherstone's attention was attracted by the group in the garden.

"Colonel Cazalette," she cried, "thanks to you, I have spent the most amusing afternoon! There's nothing I enjoy so much as meeting celebrities, proper or improper. I can quite understand

that as you can have the privilege of a *tête-à-tête* with Princess Balzani whenever you please, her parties have very little charm for you; but I must say that I consider you behaved rather unchivalrously in deserting us two innocents when we were in, to say the least of it, equivocal society. Lord Bretland isn't always equal to social emergencies. I don't believe, our two selves excepted, that there was a single person in the room whose morals could be called unimpeachable. *Divorcées* were in the ascendant. People should not show themselves before the decree *nisi* has been pronounced. It's embarrassing, especially when one has an unsophisticated country cousin to chaperon." And she nodded at the good-looking Englishman, who laughed a little fatuously, and compared his cousin to Mrs. Bancroft in the gambling scene in 'Odette,' while he drew back to make way for the entrance of Madame Fano. Varuna advanced to her sister. Warrender, pale, conscious, stood in her rear. For a second, across the room, his eyes met those of Miss Kilsyth. A thousand memories awoke, and a certain scene in the avenue at Marelands when, standing by the shrine of her faith, she had bidden him leave her, rose vividly before his imagination. It was a day of revelations. Helena's glance, though instantly averted, caused a wild suspicion to dart through his mind. But it was banished almost as rapidly as it had been evoked.

"Helena!" said Varuna, extending her arms.

A shudder passed over the young girl's frame. She started violently, then with an effort at self-command tried to speak, and mechanically bent forward to embrace her sister. But the lips which met those of Varuna were cold as marble.

"Helena!" repeated Madame Fano in accents of alarm. "You are ill. Mother, do you not see that the journey and excitement have exhausted her strength?"

"I—I am ill," faltered poor Helena, and fainted in her sister's arms.

TEMPLE BAR.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED "BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY."

APRIL 1884.

Peril.

By JESSIE FOTHERGILL.

Author of 'The First Violin,' 'Kith and Kin,' etc.

PART I.

AT 61, GREAT NORTH STREET.

Chapter VIII.

UNEXPECTED COERCION.

AT the sound of the door closing after Nowell, Margaret, with a little half-inarticulate sound, made a step towards it; then paused and drew back. Her work was effectually stopped for the rest of the evening—essay, peroration and all. She sat down again in the chair she had occupied all the time that Hugh had been haranguing her, and began to reflect and wonder, to debate and to argue within herself, as to how she was to carry this thing through. As a matter of bald and prosaic truth, her reason for refusing to marry Hugh was, that she distrusted him; not his good heart, as she had said to him, nor his generous spirit, but his self-knowledge and his constancy. And even now, though thrilling with what he had told her, though feeling still the electric shock given by the pressure of his hands upon hers, and feeling her gaze waver and grow unsteady beneath the ardour of his look, she distrusted him still; she felt still that to remain persistent in her refusal would be for her the wiser part. As she had said to him, she was not necessary to him; he might suffer now, if she said him nay, but—Margaret smiled rather faintly to herself—could there be any question as to which of them would continue longest to feel regret and yearning? Not for a moment. He would go

out into the world, and find it beautiful, and get indemnified in a thousand ways for his disappointment. She would stay at home with her father, and pursue her appointed career, and years and time would doubtless bring to her the conviction that she had this night done wisely and well; though before that conviction came, it was probable that more than once she would wish she had been three years younger, or somewhat more beautiful. It would be a meaningless, unreasonable wish—equivalent to wishing she was some one else—and perhaps at the same time not an unnatural one.

Margaret Hankinson had had a happy youth and young womanhood; her father had always been peculiarly fond of her, and indulgent to her. The kindly, commonplace man, with mediocre mind and regular, prosy middle-class habits, had been proud of his daughter's abilities and superior cleverness. He did not understand the greater number of what he called, in no sneering tones, her crotchets—they were perfectly incomprehensible to him—but he was quite sure that since she cared for them, they must be worth something in some way, and he did his part to the furthering of them: supplied her liberally with money to carry them out. Her cleverness was his pride and delight, and he took pleasure in catching hold of any person, man or woman, who was understood to be clever, or original, or remarkable, and bringing them up to see her. If he could not understand them, or make out what they were driving at, Margaret could, without the shadow of a doubt. He quite understood that her opinions on some points were considered unorthodox—nay, must be unorthodox. Did she not eschew any attendance at Ebenezer, the saving strength of whose ordinances it had never entered his head to doubt? He had heard her talk about philistines and philistinism; he had no real idea what it meant, but he always associated it in his own mind with Goliath of Gath, and little David with his sling and his stones. Perhaps Margaret was little David, and intended to slay the Philistine with some moral stone and sling of whose nature he was ignorant. It was doubtless an allegory, for she was very clever, and whether her opinions "went against" her or not, she did not seem to mind; she appeared to be very happy as she was.

Margaret, on her side, was deeply devoted to the father who had all her life shown her kindness and indulgence, and had furnished her with the means of indulging tastes and following pursuits just because she loved them, though, had they been explained to him, they probably would not have recommended themselves very strongly to him. She had always repaid this

generosity and indulgence by consulting, and if possible anticipating, his wishes; she never obtruded her own ideas upon him, where they differed from his; she yielded in all things like that of the meeting the other night, when he had announced that he did not like her to go unprotected by his presence. She loved him much, and often congratulated herself on the fate which had given her such a father: so honest, so upright, so charitable and unselfish; better in his plain, homely unpretentiousness, so she often told herself, than some gilded sham, whose appearance was glittering, and whose brilliance concealed a hollow void. It was a very happy household, that in Queen Street, though it consisted of but two persons. Variety and company, and pleasant talk, were seldom wanting there, and the free-thinking daughter and the orthodox father lived on the very best of terms. He—Mr. Hankinson—was, and always had been, a strict chapel-goer, and a deacon; a man of much weight in the counsels of Ebenezer. It may be said by the initiated that certain dissenting sects are apt to be somewhat inquisitorial in the matter of the conduct of their members. How was it that Mr Hankinson's daughter should so long have been defying the laws of the sect to which her father belonged; neglecting its ordinances; setting at nought its burnt-offerings, in the shape of bazaars and tea-parties—ignoring it, in fact, and he never be expostulated with in the matter? Amongst "the people called Friends," it is customary for certain grave and reverend members, male and female, to make yearly pilgrimages or excursions amongst members of the body, and give them homilies on their spiritual and material affairs, engage in prayer with them, reprove them if they have shown signs of wrong-doing, and—marked characteristic of the solid worldly wisdom which pervades the piety of these admirable religionists—exhort them, if they have not already set their worldly affairs in order, to do so without loss of time. Why, then, had not Mr. Hankinson been taken to task by a much more bigoted body than the Friends, for not causing his daughter to regulate her behaviour and expressed opinions a little more in conformity with his own? For the very simple reason, which he knew, and they knew, and she knew, and everybody else knew, though they never said anything about it—the reason that Brother Hankinson was a solid man, whose good income and small family made him able to afford substantial help to the "body," and the minister, and the chapel, and a man whose withdrawal from their ranks would very grievously incommode Ebenezer, and all connected therewith. So, without any large demonstration of words, the heresy was winked at. Ebenezer, with Deacon Robert Hankinson at the head and front of its

affairs, went on its way; Margaret went hers, and no one was any the worse, while a great many were decidedly the better for it—those poor, for instance, to whom Margaret devoted a great deal of the time which might otherwise have been taken up in the vain ceremonies which are just as common in dissenting chapels as in ritualistic churches.

She thought about his goodness now, as she sat, half sad, half happy, after Hugh's departure, and thought to herself that, let come what come might, she had a friend and a companion who would never be fickle, never fail her. And while she was thus thinking, the door opened, and Margaret, turning her large, wet eyes towards it, saw that father of whom she had even now been thinking.

"Aha, Margery—why, have you been crying, my girl?"

He stopped abruptly, as he more fully comprehended the fact that his daughter's cheeks were wet and her eyes glistening. She could not deny that she had wept, but she recovered herself with an effort, dried her eyes with her handkerchief, and said that it was nothing.

"You don't usually cry about nothing," he said, coming nearer to her, and looking very seriously at her.

Margaret, now quite mistress of herself, smiled, went up to him, laid her hand upon his arm, and gave him the kiss with which she was wont to greet him on his return home in the evening.

"How did your finance committee go off? and was the meal 'square' enough to satisfy Deacon Cash?"

Mr. Hankinson propped himself with his back against the mantelpiece, and surveyed her. He was a fresh-complexioned man, with grey whiskers and moustache—not a bad-looking man, though his eyes and nose were both too small. It was certainly not from him that Margaret had inherited her splendid grey eyes, and large, meditative gaze.

"The meal was right enough, and so was the committee," said he, still looking rather sharply at her; "but it's quite contrary to my notions to go out to a meeting, and when I get home to find you looking so odd, and with tears on your face."

"My dear father, pray think nothing about it. I've been writing a paper. It excited me; I wanted to say something to women that should go home to them, and make them feel, and you can't do that without the expenditure of any emotion whatever."

"Can't you? Have you been alone all the evening?"

'No, not all the evening."

"Who have you had? Some one in distress, telling a pitiful tale, I suppose, and making you cry?"

The temptation to say "yes" was very strong, for she felt a profound unwillingness to reveal the real nature of her visitor's errand that evening. But she said:

"No. At least, it was only Hugh Nowell."

"I'm glad you said that."

"Why?" she asked, struck by something peculiar in his manner, and wondering what possible interest he could have in the matter.

"It shows me that I can depend upon you. If you had taken the fancy to say what wasn't true, for instance, I should have found you out; for I met him a few minutes ago, just turning into Great North Street, and he said he had been here."

Mr. Hankinson spoke in a tone of something like triumph, as if he thought Margaret had been intending to tell him a falsehood and had escaped detection by great good luck. She looked earnestly at him, more surprised than ever, and saw that there was some indefinable change in his manner and appearance, corresponding to this inexplicable difference in his way of speech. This change chilled her and made her uncomfortable, she knew not why.

"Why should I wish to tell you an untruth, father?" she asked gently, but in some bewilderment. Then she began to wonder if by any chance Nowell, on meeting her father, could have told him what had passed. In a moment she felt that this was highly improbable; so improbable that she dismissed the idea from her mind, and was reduced to wondering again what, in vulgar parlance, could have "come over" her father, to make him treat her in this manner.

"How long is it since he went away?" asked Mr. Hankinson, not answering her surprised question.

"I really don't know. It cannot be long, since you say you met him at the corner of Great North Street."

"Ay, that's true. Ten minutes say, now, since I stopped and spoke to him. When I meet him, he's whistling a tune, like any blackbird, fairly as if his heart was overflowing with joy. Then I come straight away home, and find my daughter in tears, brooding over the fire; things that don't happen once in five years, and never both at once, so far as I know. Don't you think I should be a fool, Margery, if I didn't begin to put two and two together?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"Do you cry with grief because he didn't say what he ought to have said, or with joy because he did?"

"Really, neither one nor the other. I—how—what do you mean?" she asked, in a tone of something like irritation, as her bewilderment grew greater and greater. It was not thus that he was wont to speak to her. This jerky attempt at flippancy was as unlike his usual homely directness as anything could be, and underneath it all she detected a sort of eagerness which puzzled her more than everything else.

"You are generally more open with me than this, and I'm trying to spare your feelings," he said. Margaret thought, in a parenthesis, that he adopted a singular method of doing so. "But, as it seems you won't meet me half-way, I must go direct to the point. Did Hugh Nowell ask you to marry him?"

Margaret was thunderstruck. She had not imagined for a moment that her father had been conscious of anything of the kind. He must have been watching both Hugh and her carefully and with interested eyes, and the knowledge that he had done so made her feel alarmed and uneasy.

"Yes, he did," she said slowly.

"Ah—h—h!" said Mr. Hankinson, with a long-drawn breath, which, if not a deep sigh of relief, was the most like it of any sound she had ever heard. He struck his hands together, and the look on his face answered to the expression of his voice. While she was groping about in her mind after the possible meaning of it all, he caught hold of her hand, and in a tone which strove to be cordial and fatherly, but which was actually rapid and anxious, he said eagerly:

"Then what are you crying for, Margery?—unless they are tears of joy, as I said. Yes, that's it, I suppose; so they won't last long, will they? Give me a kiss, my girl. I am very glad; this makes me very happy."

Then he had been expecting it, looking and waiting for it; he had contemplated the idea with approval, had perhaps encouraged Hugh's frequent visits with the distinct hope of such a consummation. This idea revolted and in a measure outraged Margaret. She could say nothing; the strangeness of it stiffened her tongue, drove back her feelings of affection, and seemed to plant her fast where she stood.

"Come, child!" he said, still in the same jerky, unnatural voice, "what does this mean? Surely you didn't quarrel with him as soon as you'd settled everything?"

"I don't know what you mean. We—we settled nothing. I told him I could not marry him," said Margaret, almost in gasps.

"What!" began Mr. Hankinson; and then, after a momentary pause, "What foolery is this?" he asked roughly. "Do you mean to tell me that you have been behaving like an idiot?"

"Father!"

"Don't look at me in that way, girl, as if you were blessed with only half your senses. A woman who sets up to be clever ought to know better than to behave in that way. Are you shilly-shallying? or do you mean to tell me right out that Hugh Nowell proposed to you, and you sent him about his business?"

"He asked me to marry him; I said no. He asked my reasons; I gave them. He said he would come for my final answer on his return from London, and——"

"Ah, that's all right, then; though I think you need not have been so delicate about it. I know it used to be considered pretty in a girl to be coy and shy, and say she couldn't think of such a thing; but we live in a more practical age now, and all that has passed by. The women are more, the men are fewer; and yes or no is what is wanted, and to have the field clear. However, there's not so much harm done. It can be made up when he comes home."

"It will not be made up. I told him I could promise him no other answer when he did return."

"Well, that was a mistake. You must give him a very different answer."

"Do you mean that you are very anxious for me to marry Hugh Nowell?"

"You must marry him, so that's all about it."

"Why?"

"I have ample reasons—most adequate reasons."

"I think I have a right to ask what they are."

"Very important business reasons——" he began.

"Father," said Margaret, in a tone of sorrow and scorn mingled, "do you seriously mean that you expect me to take a man whom I refused, simply because you say in general terms that there are business reasons? that is a strange view to take of marriage. Business reasons usually concern money: do you mean that you would receive some pecuniary profit if I disposed of myself to Hugh Nowell?"

An hour before, if any one had depicted this scene to her, or had prophesied that she would be heard saying things like this to her dear father, she would have looked upon it as an insane dream; but now, such was the change wrought in her mental and moral attitude, that she flung the words at him with some vigour,

in the hope that they might awaken in him some sense of the unusualness of his behaviour, just as one might pour raw brandy by tumblerfuls down the throat of a man fainting from loss of blood. The words which seemed to her so awful that she shook as she uttered them, produced no startling effect upon him, and it began at last dimly to dawn upon her mind that there was something behind it all—some hidden cause for this strange behaviour; he had a secret reason pressing upon his mind, which made him impervious to the usual arguments of reason and common-sense. As he only shook his head and uttered an impatient sound after her tragic question, she suddenly said, coldly and resolutely:

"I am tired of talking in this way. It means nothing, and it will lead to nothing. I will leave you alone, and try to forget about it."

"Not so fast," he said, catching hold of her wrist as she moved away. "You don't seem to me to take in the meaning of what we are talking about." Margaret felt her heart sink; it was just what she had been thinking he failed to do—take in the meaning of it. "Hugh Nowell will go to London directly. When he comes back, he will want your answer. You will tell him that you have changed your mind, and will marry him, or by G—, Margery, it's all over between us, and you may fend for yourself as well as you can! So now I hope you understand."

His face had changed. Its fresh colour seemed to have faded; the cheeks were fallen and wrinkled; there were folds under the eyes which stared at her with a haggard look—with a look, as it seemed to her, of desperation. A nameless dread took possession of Margaret's spirit. The threat he had uttered fell almost unheeded on her ears. What gave it its terror was the unknown something which must be goading him to say things like this to her—her to whom he had so often said that they two were independent of all the world but themselves. She did not speak, she did not answer him; she loosed her hand from his grasp, and with averted face got out of the room, and presently found herself somehow in her bedroom, and alone.

* * * * * *

She passed an almost sleepless night, with the heavy conviction in her mind and weighing down her spirit, that to-morrow the horrible strife, which had started up like a spectre between herself and her father, would have to be renewed. The reasons which made him determined for her to marry Hugh Nowell were far too urgent, as she had plainly seen from his face, to be disposed of by "sleeping upon them." The storm would not have

blown over, leaving a clear sky. Her mind was filled with vague and shadowy doubts and terrors of all kinds. Her existence had become literally dust and ashes, and all within the course of an hour's conversation. So great was the dread she felt of what she might hear in the morning, that over and over again she felt a strong temptation to ring, and tell the maid to say she felt ill and could not come downstairs. But then, calling herself a coward, and bracing herself up, she overcame this feeling, rose at her usual hour, dressed, and went into the breakfast-room. She always retained a vivid recollection of this whole scene; the morning light of a grey February day, cold and clear, but sunless; the familiar things of the room; the breakfast-table spread, the letters and newspapers, and the accustomed face and figure of her father at the foot of the table with his back to the window. She could not see his face very plainly, just because of that; but she had a general impression of its looking sad, anxious, and dejected. Just at first, some of the painful impression left by the scene of last night seemed to fade away; it rolled itself back, like some half-remembered nightmare, and things grew brighter again. But not for long. Her sleepless night had given her a feeling of lassitude and weariness; her eyes felt heavy and her head ached. It was an almost silent meal. *The* topic was avoided, because the waiting-maid had to come in once or twice, and this formed a respite for which Margaret was thankful.

When breakfast was over, she took up one of the newspapers; she would look over it, and say something about any news there might be, just to break the painful and unnatural silence of this miserable morning. But before she had time fairly to open it, her father began:

"Well, Margery, have you slept upon it—our talk last night, I mean?"

"I have thought about it; I can't say I have slept much. I was too unhappy to sleep."

"That's a pity. I don't want you or any one else to be unhappy, but the very reverse. You have at any rate come to a better way of thinking, I hope."

"If you mean that I have decided to recall my refusal to Hugh Nowell, I have not."

"Don't take upon yourself to be obstinately perverse, my girl. It isn't like you—and it doesn't pay, in any sense of the word."

"Asking for a reason can hardly be called being obstinately perverse. You seem to think that it is a mere nothing to decide upon marrying a person—in the dark—a person whom you don't wish to marry."

"Come, come! You can't look me in the face and say you don't care for him."

She looked at him dumbly, in silent despair, wondering if he were losing his senses. The thing he had just said to her would have made her crimson with shame yesterday—could it be yesterday, and not twenty years ago that the strife had begun?—now she received it callously; it glided aside, without stinging; seeming only part of the whole inexplicable business.

"Come, Margery," he said, "it's getting time for me to be going down to the office. Give me your promise, and let me go with a light heart."

"You will drive me mad!" she exclaimed passionately. "How can you ask me such things? You say I must marry Hugh Nowell. I do not say nothing would induce me to marry him; but I do say I will not do so in the dark, and because you say I must. I must have a reason, and one that is a cogent one, before I will think about it."

There was a little silence; then, in a singularly quiet and colourless voice, Mr. Hankinson said:

"There is just this reason, that if you don't, I am a ruined man."

The words, portentous as they were, seemed to fall with no meaning on her ear. She said:

"Ruined, father! In what way could you be ruined, without Nowells being ruined too! So long as they are prosperous, I don't see what harm can come to you."

Another silence, while Mr. Hankinson in his heart felt a kind of mingled pride in her innocence, and impatience at her obtuseness. She had not the faintest glimmering of an idea why he should be ruined unless "Nowells" were ruined also. Talk about the penetration of women—why, nothing could be more stonily obtuse than this clever daughter of his.

"Don't you?" he said, at last. "I've been speculating. Now, do you understand?"

"Speculating!" A look of absolute relief dawned upon her face. "Oh, father! why did you not tell me? You have made yourself poor, and been worrying yourself about ways and means. And have you nothing better to propose than that I should marry Hugh Nowell, to get you out of your difficulties?" In the immense relief she felt, she laughed aloud. "Why, if the worst come to the worst, if you lost all that you have saved, you have still your post, and your salary, and *me*. Do you think I would ever desert you? We'll go into a little house, and I'll do the work with my own hands, and you shall know no difference,

except that the rooms will be a trifle smaller. Why didn't you tell me at first?" she added, putting her hands upon his shoulders, and laughing at him. "It was very naughty of you to think that I would marry anybody, just because we were in difficulties. Oh, never fear, we will pull through. I am a splendid hand where hard work is wanted."

His face did not lighten; his eyes did not cheer. He looked at her stolidly, and then he wiped his brow with his handkerchief, and she saw that there was a clammy sweat upon it.

"You have let this prey upon your mind till you have got morbid," she said; "and thought there was only one way out of it. Tell me how bad it is, dear. I don't care, I am ready to meet it, and stand by you in it."

His agony broke out at last in an oath.

"D—n it, Margaret, you might be a fool! Do you think I should care if it was *my* money?"

She turned cold, and trembled where she stood. Her hands slid off his shoulder, and fell down at her sides; and she stared at him, understanding everything now, and perfectly overwhelmed by it now that she did know it. With the utterance of the last words, he broke down. She saw her father sit down upon the sofa, and cry—cry like a woman. And all she could think of to say was:

"You have betrayed your trust."

"Nought of the sort," said he, starting up, and looking at her, a broken-down, ghastly-looking figure. And then he went on, in almost incoherent style, rapidly and angrily:

"What I've done, I've done for his good. There isn't common gratitude or decency in the world, with such as him. If I'd been disposed to be dishonest—if I had wanted to 'betray my trust' as you call it, I might have had fine pickings of it if you like. What do you look at me in that way for? Did you never hear of cooking accounts? Not that I've done it; nothing of the kind. I stand to clear fifty thousand pounds by this railway—for him, that is for him. I might take a little commission; and I deserve a very big one. But I must have time, and I must have help, and when Hugh is your husband he'll be with me heart and soul. I've been extending the business—I hate your miserable farthing a pound profits; a man is nowhere with them in these days . . . old men, like him, get so cautious. They turn conservative, and don't understand enterprise. Young ones, like his grandson, are different. With his help, I can bring the old man round; without it, I can answer for nothing, though all that I've been doing I've done for his good, and no one will be more ready

than he to clutch at the profits when I hand them over to him. . . . Betrayed my trust," he added, looked angrily at her, as he repeated her words—"that's a bold thing for a girl to say to her father, and a father like me."

"Forgive me! I hardly knew what I was saying. I am glad you have told me. The thing will be to make up with your own money for what you have used of Mr. Nowell's, won't it, and, if necessary, lose your own? If the speculation turns out well, it will be all right; but I'm sure you won't speculate any more with his money, will you?"

"My money's all tied up, so that I can't get at it in a moment; no, nor a month," said he drearily, propping his chin on his hands, and staring before him with the expression which is perhaps one of the most painful sights there can be—that of an elderly man whose pursuit of gain has landed him in insuperable difficulties. The sordidness of the thing he has fixed his mind upon for so long, comes out in the expression on his face.

There is no halo of nobility, or poetry, or romance in it; it is just the dreary, blank hopelessness—the plain, uninviting prose of ignoble grief over an ignoble loss.

"Then let us meet the worst together," she said steadfastly. "Whatever Mr. Nowell may say, Hugh will not be hard upon you I know."

"That's very fine talk," he said, pulling himself up from the sofa; "it's fine to talk of 'meeting the worst together.' You don't know what the worst can be, and it need never come at all if you would do your duty."

"I know what you mean," she said quietly, and not caring to waste any more eloquence or any more indignation on the subject. "But it is quite out of the question. I will do any kind of work; anything that is honest. But I will not tell lies, and cheat Hugh, and degrade myself in that way."

"No, no! It's all a matter of self," he said, with a feeble sneer, as he pulled his coat across his chest, and put on an attempt at a jaunty air, pitifully unlike his usual careless ease of demeanour. "It's always the way with people who despise Christianity and chapel-going. When I hear people setting down their poor silly old fathers as superstitious, and talking about the immorality of the popular religion, I look to them to do something sterling in the hour of need, and I find I might just as well lean upon the broken reed talked about in the Scriptures that they despise so much."

Petty reproaches and stings of a petty mind, as these were, they tore Margaret's heart to pieces. She could not have

imagined herself becoming so unhappy as she felt now. Her father turned to the door, saying:

"Well, I wish you a pleasant time with your reflections upon your treatment of me. For my part, I've a clear conscience with regard to you. You may hear of my ruin any day, and you'll have yourself to thank for it."

He went away. She felt convinced, from his tone, that there could be no immediate danger of "ruin," as he called it; "exposure" was the disagreeable word which rang in her ears. She had been so proud of him, not for a genius, or a man of the world, but as a plain, self-made man—one of the "people" whom she loved so, and in whose heart beat the blood that, she would gladly tell herself, filled her heart too. What—she had asked herself many a time—what had all the grandeur, aristocracy, honour in all the world to give, for which she would have bartered her honest, burgher blood, her good, unstained, middle-class name? Nothing, and less than nothing. She had been prouder of her father's well-won dignity, gained with clean hands in honest trade, than any duke of his ancient coronet; but now, behold, the hands were no longer clean, nor the brow without a stain. He had cheated—yes, that was the word—cheated his employer; proposed to himself that he should screen himself from the consequences of his dishonesty by her marriage with that employer's heir; and when she declined to carry out the scheme, he had reproached her for a hypocrite. That was about what it came to. And then the question began to assail her, what was she to do in the matter? Was she to sit silent, or was she—no, it could not be that she would be required to make it known to any one that he had done wrong? She felt tired of the debate; her head reeled; she at length decided that nothing could be done for the present, at any rate. Her father might have exaggerated as to the difficulty of getting at his own money. When he found she would not fall into his scheme, he would think better of that; he would see that it was not only honesty, but the best policy too, to restore what he had misused.

With the afternoon post she received a note from Hugh Nowell:

"I am going to London to-night instead of next week. I reckon on your promise that I shall see you on my return."

Margaret smiled mournfully. Who could say what might not have happened by the time of his return?"

Chapter IX.

THE GATHERING STORM.

During the time when Hugh had been arguing with Margaret Hankinson on the subject of the supremacy or non-supremacy of beauty over mind, Peril, feeling very dull and very bored, had been amusing herself, as she sometimes did, by trying to frighten Mrs. Robson out of her senses. Mr. Nowell, who had been out of sorts all day, had retired early, and the two women were left alone. It will easily be imagined that, considering the terms on which they stood, they were not in the habit of indulging in affectionate or confidential conversations. Indeed, they never did converse, but Peril was sometimes inspired to talk in such a manner as to make Mrs. Robson's flesh creep, so she said. Being a very religious woman, and strongly convinced that she, and all like her, were sheltered by Providence with a very peculiarly great care and favour, it was perhaps not surprising that she should be at the same time exceedingly superstitious. Peril had found out this weakness long ago, and occasionally, when she felt less miserable than malicious, she was tempted to play upon it, to her own great comfort and the very sore dismay of her enemy.

They were alone in the drawing-room; there was complete stillness over all the house. Mrs. Robson sat by the fire and knitted a grey woollen sock, and meditated apparently. Presently she observed:

"I wonder if we shall be able to go anywhere this year for change of air? I doubt it."

"Oh! I think we shall. If he dies there will be nothing to prevent us; and, if he is well enough, he will want to go away himself."

"I have been thinking of Kelsall Bank," said Mrs. Robson, naming a peculiarly dreary sea-side resort, so called, on the ugliest part of the west coast, to which they had last year paid a visit of six weeks, during which Peril's wretchedness had become so great that she had many a time meditated casting herself into the sea, and had told Hugh that she would certainly have done so had it been possible; but that when she considered that in order to drown herself she would have to wade at least fifty yards into the deep, in full view of all the houses on the esplanade, she had given up the attempt as likely to be frustrated, though most of the said houses were empty.

When, therefore, she now heard Mrs. Robson suggest Kelsall Bank, and bethought herself that if they did decide upon it she

would have to go too, and to leave Hugh at home, save for rare intervals, at full liberty to spend as much of his time as he liked with Margaret Hankinson, her heart sank; and she seemed again to see that waste of grey shallow water, those miles of yellow sands, and the undulating dreariness of the expanse of sandhills behind the little village.

"Kelsall Bank is a queer place," she said meditatively. "It used to give me the oddest sensations; at least, I suppose it was the place, I never felt like that anywhere else. Did you never feel odd there?"

"Odd; what do you mean?"

"Creepy and queer," said Peril, drawing nearer to the fire with a little shiver.

"I really don't see what there could be in a plain, matter-of-fact place like Kelsall Bank to make *any one* feel creepy and queer, unless they were very superstitious indeed," said Mrs. Robson loftily, and naturally condemning most strongly her own unconscious weakness.

"So I used to think," said Peril, fixing her great eyes dreamily upon the blaze. "I used to look round during the day-time, when every flat ugly thing about the place used to seem to rise up and slap you in the face, and say, 'You talk about a beautiful world; only come here, and you shall see what bad taste Nature can show sometimes.' I used to wonder then where the ghostly things I saw in the dark could possibly come from."

"Ghostly things—in a lodging-house!" said Mrs. Robson, with unmitigated contempt. "That is one of the results of being educated in a superstitious religion by nuns, and people who never reason."

"Ah! you never saw the things I am speaking of, I suppose."

"Why, what on earth *could* you see? Did you take the bathing-machines for phantom ships in the dusk?" said Mrs. Robson, with graceful badinage.

Peril shook her head with a weird smile.

"I used to sit at that side window—don't you remember we had the very end house on the esplanade, and there were five empty ones between us and the next inhabited one?—I could see a corner of the sea, which was as cold and grey as ashes long after a fire has burnt out, and I could see still more of the sandhills, with the green bents waving about in the wind. I used to watch the darkness creeping upwards out of the sea and out of the sandhills. The darkness there is different from what it is here—it is a real thing; and I used to observe it gradually spreading its great black, bat-like wings, till it filled up all the hollow, and

covered all the sands, and brooded over all the sea. What an enormous creature it must be; and"—she bent forward, staring into Mrs. Robson's face with eyes which seemed to be fixed upon other worlds—"*how does it manage to conceal itself during the day?* that is what puzzled me."

"Oh, what a nasty creepy notion! I shall never like that end house again!" said Mrs. Robson.

"I told you it was an odd place, and you laughed at me," said Peril, in a tone of gentle reproach. "I was sure, from that feeling I had about that one thing, that it was an unusual place. I often feel convinced that the darkness brings a great many things out of their holes which go flying and creeping about. If we could see them we should be frightened, some of us; and there I proved it, you see."

"You talk great nonsense!" said Mrs. Robson, and this time apprehension mingled with contempt in her tones.

"Oh no! I often feel the same bat-like creature flapping its wings in my own mind; and it does not need to be night for it to come. But, apart from that, I heard a story there one day which plainly proves that many things take place there which are not easily to be explained."

"That may be," Mrs. Robson admitted. "There are many things which *we* can't explain, if we would only admit it."

"One day, when we were there, I went out for a walk alone in the afternoon. I went away over the sandhills, and towards some fields where there was a farm; a man called James Hindle lived there."

"Well," said Mrs. Robson, frightened but fascinated.

"I found James Hindle himself at home. He had been suffering from rheumatism, so, as I was tired with my long scrambling over the sandhills, I went in to rest, and they gave me a piece of oat-cake and a cup of milk; and he told me tales about all the 'boggarts,' as he called them, in the neighbourhood."

"Silly, superstitious old man!"

"Simple he might be, but he was not silly. Superstitious you might call him, but it was nothing *he* had seen. You remember Black Moss?"

"Ye—yes."

"On the other side of the sandhills, to the north-east of his farm. He told me of strange things that had been heard and seen on Black Moss. He said that a few weeks before that, quite late at night, there came a knock at his door, and when he opened it two young men stood there—gentlemen both of them, he declared—quite pale and trembling. They begged for a rest, and

he bade them come in and sit down in the ingle-nook, and asked if they had met with an accident, as they seemed so flurried; or, as he said, 'fleyed.' And they said no; but that while travelling on foot over one of the cross-paths over Black Moss, they had suddenly been stopped by seeing something black cross their path. They started back surprised, and looked on; and what do you suppose it was?"

"Oh! how should I know? probably they had drunk too much, and thought they saw things when there was nothing to see," said Mrs. Robson, in a tremulous voice.

"They were as sober as he was when he told me the tale. What they saw was a funeral procession, and it passed noiselessly by them," said Peril impressively, as she eyed her victim to observe the effect upon her of this well-worn scarecrow. "A great hearse, with plumes, mutes, mourning coaches, and then a long array of mourners with scarfs and hat-bands, and *gloves*, and everything."

At the "*gloves*, and everything," Mrs. Robson gasped, and Peril, with unchanging solemnity of countenance, proceeded:

"All this in the dead of the night, gliding by, silent as the grave to which it was going. Wasn't it horrible?"

"I—I——"

"The two young gentlemen, whom James Hindle described as strapping young fellows, were so terrified that they could scarcely stand. They clung to each other, and could only gaze at the phantoms—because they must have been phantoms, you know—it was probably a certain sign that one or both of them must die within a given time. And each wanted to make it out that the other had seen it first; but James Hindle told them he did not think that mattered. As they had both seen it, they would probably both die. What would you have done if you had seen such a thing?"

"I—I don't imagine I should ever have seen anything so silly."

"I didn't know that a funeral was ever considered silly exactly," said Peril, very gravely, "especially in the dead of the night, in a place like that. It's true I wondered what sort of people they could be, to be having a funeral at midnight, but that is all the stronger proof that it was an omen, I should say."

Mrs. Robson was silent, but she trembled. Pride forbade her to beg Peril not to tell her any more horrible stories; superstition made her hair stand on end at the history of the funeral procession across Black Moss in the dead of the night. In Peril's pale face, and in the expression upon it, she read, as it were, a whole catalogue of similar stories, or stories surpassing this one. In

order to escape, she was about to make some excuse for leaving the room, when the door opened, and Hugh walked in.

"Oh, Hugh, back again!" smiled Mrs. Robson, instantly feeling very valiant.

"Yes. It is later than I thought. I have been at the Hankinsons', but I left there ever so long ago, and held a sort of drawing-room on the way home. Met everybody I knew."

"Including?" said Peril.

"First, Mr. Hankinson——"

"I thought you said you'd been at Mr. Hankinson's?"

"I was, but he was out. There was only Mar—Miss Hankinson at home."

"Aha!" said Peril, bowing her head gently, and smiling sweetly, and watching him closely.

"Then I met Lawford smoking his pipe under the windows of the house in which you dwell, Peril."

"Rather aimless of him, if he does," said she, while Mrs. Robson looked up sharply.

"He sent a message," pursued Hugh. "I think myself, that he is very hard hit."

Peril lifted her head, and her lip curled.

"Who is making silly, vulgar jokes now?" she asked.

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure," said Hugh, laughing, and laughing, too, so light-heartedly that they both silently remarked upon it. "But he really desired his compliments to you."

"I am obliged to him. You can give him mine, when next you see him," said she.

Hugh presently observed that he was going to do some reading in the library, wished them good-night, and left the room.

It was a little after ten. They were again left alone. Hugh's brief interruption had dissipated the supernatural terrors, and Mrs. Robson now observed, with a half-laugh, half-simper, such as is commonly affected by persons of her calibre when speaking of love in any of its shapes:

"Really, Peril, I think there is something in what Hugh says, though you took him up so shortly; and a certain gentleman seems to me very much smitten with a certain young lady."

Peril fixed her eyes upon her, and said gravely: "Do you think so?"

"I'm quite sure of it. I noticed it even that first night he was here; and from little things that Hugh has said since, I'm certain of it."

"Ah! It is not of much use for any one to be 'struck' with me," said Peril, in a half-regretful tone, as she leaned her head

back, and looked towards the ceiling. "I often think it would be rather nice to have some one in love with me——"

"Ah, yes," sighed Mrs. Robson, shaking her head. "An unselfish affection is a great comfort."

"Oh, I don't mean anything so namby-pamby as 'unselfish affection;' I mean a great passion, such as one reads of—something with some life and fire in it. But it's all of no use speculating about such things. If half Darkingford were ready to fall at my feet, I should still be shut up tight, like the princess in the brazen tower."

"Yes, your poor dear grandfather has so outlived his own youth, that he forgets other people can have any. He does not remember how young people feel——"

"I think, when people get so old that they can't remember that, they ought to die," said Peril distinctly; "both for their own sakes, and the sake of everybody else."

Waiving for this occasion her usual conventionally rigid horror of such outspoken disloyalty, Mrs. Robson said:

"If I were Hugh, I should ask Mr. Lawford in quietly now and then. Your grandfather need never know anything about it, and it would be a little amusement for you all! and he is so evidently a gentleman——"

"That he would be sure to come in to a clandestine supper now and then, if invited," put in Peril sweetly. And then she rose. "I am going to bed," she observed. "It's late. At least it isn't late. People in London, and some people here, I dare say, are just beginning their evenings; but in this house ten o'clock is the signal for release—'the one far-off, divine event' for which we all long, as for our salvation, all day long. It has sounded, and I am going."

Mrs. Robson wished her good-night in a more cordial tone than usual; but Peril, standing quietly before her with hands folded, and speaking in the gentlest of voices, observed:

"I am so much obliged for your kind hints about Mr. Lawford, but I would like you to spare yourself the trouble of giving me any more. It really isn't necessary. I don't intend to play your game in the matter at all. No doubt Hugh might ask him to supper; no doubt grandpapa need know nothing about it, unless some one were to tell him what was going on, and that I was flirting with a penniless sort of person whom no one knew anything about, and to whom Hugh has given a kind of underclerk's place at the works. I can just imagine the effect of such a revelation upon him—dear old man! You shall not be tempted, Mrs. Robson; I dare say you pray every night to be

delivered from evil, and you shall, so far as I am concerned. Good-night."

With which speech she departed, leaving her hearer too astounded, too confused, and, as she would herself have said, "taken aback," to make any reply. She sat, with her knitting fallen upon her lap, and her hands upon it, for some little time, and then, stamping her foot upon the floor, exclaimed, half aloud:

"She is a fiend, and I know she will do him a mischief before all is over. I would give my right hand to have her away. And of course, as they are men, and she is good-looking, in her sulky, scowling way, they cannot imagine for a moment that she could or would do any one any harm. Fools that they are!"

The hatred between Peril and Mrs. Robson was generally of a silent, quiet kind; but when it did clothe itself in words, it flamed up fiercely in both hearts. It was not a flash and over; it rankled and burnt. Mrs. Robson would lie awake to-night, thinking of Peril's beautiful, vindictive face, and of the words that came from between her clenched teeth, and would be half-afraid of her, half-furious with her, and wholly anxious to get rid of her by some means.

As for Peril—to-night, as on other nights after similar scenes, she whirled off to her own room, there to pace about brooding, her heart full of cursing; torn this way and that by a thousand conflicting feelings. To-night, as so often before, the desire rushed over her to escape, to leave this place, to make her way back, over land and over sea, to the quiet cloister where she had been happy. That was her idea one moment; the next, she had a sense of the futility and the blank hopelessness of any such proceeding. She might go, she might shake the dust of the house in which she dwelt from her feet, but she could not make herself what she had been before. Her woe, her burden, and her heart-ache would have to go with her, and, in the quiet life there, she would have so much the more time to make intimate companions of them, to nurse them, and cherish them, and become enslaved by them.

"I wish I was back again," she thought now; "I wish I was there again, at my chants and my embroidery, believing everything they told me about God being good, and people being happy who led holy lives. It was stupid, and it wasn't true; but if I had stopped there I should never have known anything different, and it is much better to believe everything than nothing. Now, if some one came and said to me, 'God is very good, and loves you,' I should laugh, and ask why He lets me be so bad, and so miserable. If they said to me, 'God rewards holiness with happiness,' I

should laugh still more, and point to the people round about me, and ask them if they thought I was a fool. I know better than that now; I know that is all nonsense, but I am miserable. I was happier when I believed it all. I wish I had never been taken away from them."

Chapter X.

ONCE TOO OFTEN.

Nowell of course knew nothing of the concise little conversation which had taken place between Peril and Mrs. Robson after he left them. No screams or shrieks had heralded the thrust of Mrs. Robson, nor the savage manner in which Peril had beaten down her adversary's guard and stabbed her deep, in return. Had physical blows of similar violence been dealt, it is probable that surgeons on the one hand and actions for assault and battery on the other might have been the result. As it was, a few quiet words did the business—not even raised voices, or accents of vituperation. Hugh, in the library below, heard feet quietly moving about, and concluded, if he thought anything of the matter, that the womenkind were going to bed. His slumbers were not disturbed by any inkling of what had passed, though the reading of which he had spoken to them resolved itself into a long, long, and happy reverie, in which he went again over all that had passed between him and Margaret that evening.

But at breakfast on the following morning he was struck by a certain portentous gloom and silence displayed by both. He concluded that they must have found the opportunity, somehow or other, for one of their numerous quarrels; he mentally shrugged his shoulders, and, like other men under similar circumstances, resolved to get away from it all as soon as possible. Which, accordingly, he did, saying he must be at the office early, as it was market-day. And, asking no questions, and apparently not having observed that anything had gone wrong, he made good his escape, and left them. At the office, also, things seemed somehow to have a cloud over them. Hugh did not know exactly how it was. In the first place, he thought Mr. Hankinson looked very ill, or, as Hugh put it to himself, shaky. He said one or two things quite at random, and went so far as to say he had a headache. But when Hugh remarked upon this, and said that if Mr. Hankinson liked, he would put off his London visit for a time, the manager assured him with almost feverish eagerness that there was no need for anything of the kind. Mr. Hugh was mistaken in thinking him ill; it was only a passing indisposition,

and so far from wishing the visit delayed, it would be well if Nowell went a little earlier rather than later. Those people in Threadneedle Street wanted attending to very badly, and there were two other pressing calls. He had been thinking of asking Hugh if it would be very inconvenient to him to set off that night.

So far from being inconvenient, it suited Nowell's views admirably; as Mr. Hankinson intended it should. It would bring him back to Margaret, and, as he hoped, to the successful ending of his suit, almost a week sooner, and in his present state of heart and mind, a week seemed equivalent to an eternity. He joyfully assured Mr. Hankinson that it would be perfectly convenient to him to set off that night. There was a train at seven and he would leave the office a little earlier than usual, that was all. He despatched the note to Margaret, telling her of his intention, and, a little after five, reached home.

Going into the house, he looked into both the downstairs rooms to find Mrs. Robson, and tell her he was going, and ask her to see after his things. He found them empty, and took his way to the drawing-room. The gas was not lighted; the fire blazed brightly, Old Mr. Nowell was there alone.

"Holloa! all by yourself?" said Hugh.

"Well, you may see that for yourself. How's business to-day?"

Question recurring as regularly as noon and midnight, and which must be answered with a punctuality and an exactitude as great as theirs. Nowell could only give a hasty report this evening, and excused himself on the plea that he was in a hurry.

"I'm going to town to-night instead of at the week's end," he observed. "Some of these people are pressing for an answer, and Hankinson thinks the sooner I'm off the better."

"Eh?" said his elder, with a sharp, suspicious look. It was his manner always when in anyway taken by surprise, but it always irritated Nowell—as much now almost as when he had been wont first to encounter it. He rather unwillingly and rapidly repeated his information, and then, thinking he heard the sound of the hall-door opening, he quickly and abruptly left the room, purposely not hearing his grandfather's voice call his name.

"It will do when I come up again," he said to himself. "I wonder if that is Aunt Agatha, or where she is."

A servant was lighting the gas in the hall. The person who had come in, and who was now putting her umbrella in the stand, was not Mrs. Robson, but his cousin Peril.

"Have you been out alone, Peril?" he asked, following her into the library.

"Yes, to be sure," said she nonchalantly, as she picked up a kitten which was lying curled up in an armchair, and herself took the place. She leaned back and stroked the creature. "I've been to Southfield again, and I've just met your dear friend Mr. Lawford, and had a short conversation with him."

"Confound my dear friend Mr. Lawford! Do you know where Aunt Agatha is?"

"I am thankful to say I have not even seen her since breakfast-time. It is rather late in the day to be 'confounding' Mr. Lawford; I consider him one of my intimate friends."

There was ire in Peril's eyes, but Hugh did not see it, or if he did, did not notice it. He was in a hurry. He wanted something to eat, and then he was going off to London. And yet he felt indolent, and somewhat disinclined to move from this warm, pleasant room: more disposed to retain the seat he had taken on the edge of the table, to swing his legs about, and watch Peril's nonchalant grace of attitude, and her slim white hands twinkling about as she teased the kitten, for she had given over caressing now, and had begun to provoke it.

"You know he isn't anything of the kind," he said.

"Oh yes, he is. He is so delightfully easy-going. It is *such* a relief to meet a man who doesn't get into rages and fight about things. He doesn't care two straws whether we have a Liberal Government or a Tory one; and he thinks it would be such a bore to 'keep up a position,' as people say, that he is very glad he is only a vagabond."

"That's one way of looking at it," said Nowell. "Some people might say he was a lazy beggar, without any self-respect."

"Some people might say all sorts of things, but you must be in a very bad temper to say anything of the sort. No one can say he has no self-respect. He has too much of it to turn himself into a mere machine for money-making, that's all. There are different ways of looking at self-respect."

"There certainly are—and at kittens too. Do let the poor little wretch alone," said Hugh, worked up into a fever by watching the pertinacity with which she intercepted its attempts to escape.

"Ah, would you scratch me, little wretch!" she suddenly exclaimed; and the lithe hand which had been so daintily playing closed tightly round the kitten's neck.

Grasping it by the throat, she held up the wretched little struggling thing in the air and shook it, and every flexible, graceful line of her own form had changed into angry rigidity.

"Peril, put it down; you will strangle it!" he exclaimed; and forcibly loosening her grasp, he took the kitten away and dropped it on the floor.

Choking and gasping, the creature rushed off to the other side of the room, and glared at her from under a chair.

"What do I care? It scratched me."

"I don't wonder," said Hugh.

She shrugged her shoulders, and Hugh inquired next where else she had been.

"Making a call at the Magsons', and hearing about Norah's missionary. They had a sort of Dorcas-meeting going on, and wanted me to sew petticoats for pauper children. I said I thought it would save trouble if I didn't, as they would have to take it all out again. By-the-way, I've often meant to ask—who was Dorcas?"

"A good woman, in the Acts of the Apostles," said Hugh promptly. "At least, I think so; or was it in one of the Epistles?"

"Much you know about it. It is my private opinion that she was the patron saint of all gossips and scandalmongers; I heard oceans of both. Oh, what a delightful world it is that Mrs. Magson and her friends live in! Mrs. Magson would speak kindly of other people sometimes if she dared, but she dare not. I left soon on purpose to give them the opportunity of relieving their minds about me."

"I've no doubt they will take the fullest advantage of it. But look here, Peril, I am in a hurry; I must find Aunt Agatha. I'm going to London to-night, instead of on Saturday."

"To-night? Why, you promised to take me to the concert to-morrow night," said Peril, looking both angry and disappointed—as indeed she was, and as, perhaps, it was not surprising that she should be, seeing how seldom she got the chance of going to such an entertainment, especially in Hugh's company.

"So I did! I had utterly forgotten it; but even if I had remembered I couldn't have helped it. It is business that sends me, and I'm obliged to go. But you need not miss the concert, Peril; Aunt Agatha would take you."

"Aunt Agatha!"

Her voice told Nowell that Aunt Agatha was quite impracticable for the purpose.

"I quarrelled with her frightfully only last night," said Peril, "and I haven't spoken to her to-day. She began with some of her nasty, cat-like insinuations, and I told her my mind about it. Besides, even if I hadn't, imagine going with her to listen to any-

thing beautiful! She hardly knows a violin from a trombone, and she's proud of her ignorance too."

"Well, I was going to call upon Miss Hankinson to-night; I haven't time now, but I'll send her a note and ask her to take you."

"You will do no such thing," was the reply, with a sudden access of anger and sharpness in her tones. "Do you suppose I have any desire to foist myself upon people who don't want me? Why should Miss Hankinson be bothered with me? She has very likely got engagements of her own. Send the tickets back, or give them to some one else, and I'll stay at home."

"You are so hasty. There is no 'foisting,' as you call it. Mar—Miss Hankinson——"

"That's twice within twenty-four hours that you have called her 'Mar,' and stopped short. Pray does she call you 'Hugh' too? If she does she can't stop short, seeing that you have but one syllable to your name."

"Hugh's face flushed.

"Don't talk in that way, Peril," he said, both quickly and gently. "She does call me Hugh now and then. I hope she will always before long; and then there will be no more trouble about concerts or chaperons, and no more quarrels with Aunt Agatha, will there?"

Peril uttered no sound. Her face took a look as hard as stone. She had no time to realise what she felt; but it was an utter apathetic recklessness that rushed over her. So she had begun her fight too late. The game had been virtually in the hands of the other before she had ever discovered that it had been begun. Her last dim, half-confessed hope, the one spark of joy which she had had to live for, had been extinguished at a moment's notice. If Hugh expected sentimental sympathy and congratulations, he had come to the wrong place for them.

"Dear me, how beautiful! Margaret Hankinson will do whatever you wish, I have not the least doubt," she said suddenly, and in a voice which seemed to cut like a whip.

"What do you mean! What makes you speak of Miss Hankinson in that manner?" he asked, stung more by her tone than her actual words.

It was now his turn to speak coldly and freezingly, just as Peril had said to herself that he did. He contrived certainly to throw a peculiarly chilling influence into both glance and voice. The interview, begun so carelessly, had turned into a fierce combat.

"No one but you would ask such a simple question," said she,

laughing flippantly. "You are really wonderfully innocent for such a man of the world as you give yourself out to be; and she has imposed upon you in a marvellous manner. I never heard of any one but you who believed in her. She believes in nothing herself except money, and in the pursuit of that she and her father are agreed—like everyone else in Darkingford, it seems to me. I suppose she will even stoop to inveigle a boy like you in her nets—when the boy is likely to have money some time."

Peril laughed again, and lightly balanced the tips of her fingers together, looking at him all the time with a rallying air.

Nowell felt almost dizzy with mingled fury and astonishment. Here was gratitude with a vengeance! Hugh had a fine underlying sense that it was a pronounced case of a man's having nursed a serpent in his bosom with the proverbial results, which conviction afforded him some solace in the midst of his perturbation. If it had not been so dreadful he could have laughed aloud at the spectacle of Peril, turned censorious, with the censoriousness of Mrs. Magson and Ebenezer. Of course his first impulse was to turn upon her and angrily bid her hold her tongue, unless she could speak more becomingly of Margaret Hankinson; but just as he was about to speak he looked at her, and it seemed to him as if he saw woe beneath all that flippancy. As if by a revelation he saw the misery that underlay her fury. He did not connect it with any personal disappointment on her part; he was not vain, and as he was pure of any love for her, so he had not imagined that she cherished any for him. But she was unhappy. In the innocence and simplicity of his heart he wished that she had a lover of her own to teach her a little tenderness, and show her a little more sunshine. All his manlier nature came to the front. He would not retaliate; to do so would be to show himself no more self-controlled than she was herself, and would be hardly treating Margaret's name with the greatest respect imaginable. In a voice which vibrated a little, he said:

"Ah, Peril! that isn't a kind thing to say to me on such a matter. I thought you would have cared more about my happiness. I would not like to say such a bitter thing to you if you'd told me of some man you cared for; but I know that Margaret would forgive you, and what she would forgive it is not for me to resent."

Peril, hearing this rather self-conscious but perfectly well-meant little flourish, felt as if she should choke. She could have borne it far better—nay, she would have comparatively enjoyed it, if he had turned upon her, and so to speak, rent her with counter-sneers and counter-insults. But to first receive such a

blow as his virtual confession that he was in love with Margaret Hankinson, and then to be treated to a soothing speech, like a wilful child who cries because its promised toy is not forthcoming, was intolerable, utterly intolerable. Her fury hardly left her time to feel the still keener anguish inflicted by the involuntary tenderness in Hugh's tone when he spoke of Margaret. But it was all there: the full measure of the suffering that was to come, and it would come all in good time. She made no answer to his words. Her face was convulsed; her lips moved, but no sound came from them. Silently and swiftly she left the room and went upstairs, making a gesture with her hand as she passed her cousin, as though she would have swept him away.

Hugh shrugged his shoulders and rang the bell, and desired them to tell Mrs. Robson he wanted to see her particularly. Little time remained to him, and in less than an hour he had left the house without seeing either Peril or Mr. Nowell again.

Peril, almost blind with passion, had gone up the stairs as far as the drawing-room door. She entered the room because she felt as if her limbs would fail under her, and she could go no further. She found it lighted by the bright fire only; tenanted by her grandfather and no one else.

The old man had been dozing; her sudden entrance roused him, and he sat up staring blankly about him.

"Eh, Peril! what's the matter, lass? Why haven't you taken off your bonnet? And where's Mrs. Robson?"

"I don't know," she said indistinctly.

"And where's Hugh?"

"Downstairs."

"What's he going off to London for in such a hurry?"

"How do I know? Perhaps to find some money to set your friend Mr. Hutchinson up in business."

"Hutchinson will never do any business again. But I've got my money from him, hech! hech!

"You've got some money, not Hutchinson's," said Peril, standing before him, and feeling a little cold shudder thrilling through her at the horrible wickedness that she was committing, "Hugh didn't want to be so hard upon Mr. Hutchinson as you did, so he paid you out of your own money. Hutchinson is all right."

"Peril! Peril!" he quavered dolefully, "what's this you are saying about Hugh? Take care what you are saying about him."

"I'm saying what is true. I would say it if he walked into the room now, and he could not contradict me: ask him."

"It's not true; he said they had paid up all right."

"They never did. It said in the paper that they had com-

pounded with their creditors; and what's more, I heard at the Magsons' to-day that they are going to begin business again, and retrieve everything. Hugh knows how to spend other people's money."

With which, not heeding his almost agonised cry to her to remain, she walked away, leaving him wild with rage, suspicion, disappointed greed, and frantic anger against his grandson, together with the darkest forebodings as to what was to become of his money—his dear, dear money—when it got into hands like these.

Mrs. Robson, engaged with Hugh, imagined that Peril was with her grandfather. The old man was left alone for nearly an hour to con over the news, to curse Hugh, and to make all kind of plots and plans for securing his money safely when he should be gone. No one was safe. He could have trusted in Hugh, he fancied, and now he saw what he was worth. He must settle something soon: tie it up safely, and keep very quiet about it. Aha, my young master, no more of such doings! Who could ever get rich if they treated their creditors in that way? And what fortune was there that would not soon slip through the fingers which kept no firmer hold than that upon it.

"Bi' the mass!" he ejaculated, swearing the old oath that used to be familiar to his Lancashire lips when he was a lad, and which even Ebenezer's teachings had not eradicated from them. "Bi' the mass, I'll be even with them yet, and one too many for them, though they are young and I am old."

Chapter XI.

PAUL LAWFORD TO MRS. WOODFALL.

"I WONDER how all this will end, Katty, my dear. I am going to give you the history of my last mystification, which you can read or not, as you wish—I fancy you will.

"Hugh went away on Wednesday evening. I missed, and do yet miss him, very much in the office; but I did my best, and succeeded tolerably well. After all, it doesn't require much brains to do the work which, with kindly consideration for my limited capacities, they have set for me here. On the Thursday morning I had to depend entirely on my own exertions, for the day before Hankinson had been ill, and was now as cross as a bear. I have noticed a change coming lately over the spirit of that man's dream. What may be the cause of it I can't say, of course. But that is not the mystification I have to tell you about. I went

home, as usual. The evenings do not seem half so long since I have had something to do in the daytime. Now that the pinch is over, I may tell you that those days in January and the first part of February—just before I went to old Nowell's dinner-party—were black enough—so black that sometimes I felt as if I would cut my throat for a toss-up. I suppose a lot of people would say that considering I had enough secure, to grind on with, that was a most idiotic frame of mind to be in; but every day it is more strongly borne in upon my mind that man does not live by bread alone, and that perhaps those are not always the worst cases of starvation which are the most obvious and the most material. At any rate, I could not describe to you, and would not if I could, out of consideration for your feelings, the sensation that used to come crawling over me, like one of those 'slimy things that crawl with legs upon a slimy sea,' when I woke in the morning and looked round my room, and went downstairs and saw the wretched, sordid little room, empty alike of voice or face to bless one with the sight or sound of it, and realised that practically there was nothing for me to do but sit there all day long. That is over now; copying out invoices and writing orders or acknowledging them is excitement after that.

"I went home then, as I say, and had just sat down to my dinner, when the servant brought a note to me, saying that it came from Mr. Nowell's, and that the messenger waited for an answer. It was from Peril, written in a small, fine Italian hand like delicate little traceries and tendrils—the last kind of hand I should have expected her to write. I may as well give it you all, for it was short.

"'Dear Mr. Lawford,

"'My grandfather desires me to say that if you are at liberty this evening, and would call any time after seven, he would be very glad to see you, as he particularly wishes to speak to you. If you will kindly send a verbal answer by the bearer of this, it will be quite enough.

"'Yours very truly,

"'Peril Nowell.'

"My verbal message was to the effect that I would be round in about half an hour. I did not waste much time in wondering what had procured me the honour of an invitation from Nowell senior as soon as Nowell junior's back was turned; but as soon as I was ready, I made my way to Great North Street. While I was taking off my overcoat, and the servant stood by waiting, the door of the library was opened, and Miss Nowell emerged from it.

"'How do you do, Mr. Lawford?' she said very gravely and gently; and then she said to the maid, 'You need not wait. I am going upstairs, and I will take Mr. Lawford with me.'

"The girl went away, and then Peril said to me:

"'Come in here; I want to speak to you.' With which she took hold of my arm, and literally led me into the room and closed the door after us. I was somewhat surprised in secret, but I had some time ago resolved that it was not of the least use to betray any astonishment about anything that went on here, so I looked as if nothing were happening. There was a much brighter light here than in the hall, and when I looked at Peril I was more startled and more shocked than with anything else. She looked the phantom of her usual self—pale, haggard, and woebegone, and with a look in her eyes of the most devouring anxiety that I ever saw. Her voice was quick and low when she spoke.

"'Did you send for me, Miss Nowell, or was it really a message from Mr. Nowell?'

"'Oh, it was from him certainly,' she said; 'and it is that that I want to speak to you about. He means mischief.'

"Her eyes were distended, and her face white. She bent forward and stared at me. Wondering what it could be to me, or how I could possibly prevent it if he did mean mischief, however black, I rather feebly said, 'Indeed!' and waited to hear more.

"'Hugh has gone away, as you know,' she said.

"'Yes.'

"'Mrs. Robson has gone too. She left this afternoon.'

"'Mrs. Robson!' I was really amazed at this. 'I thought she never left Mr. Nowell?'

"'She never does, generally. Twice, since he began to be out of health only, has she ever gone. It wrung her heart to have to go to-day. The idea of leaving him alone in my clutches nearly turned her brain. Nothing short of absolute necessity would have driven her off, as you may suppose. She got a telegram this morning to say that her only sister, who lives near Leicester, has not many days to live. Unfortunately for her, she is not in the habit of getting telegrams; she wondered what it could be all about, and read it aloud to us, so that both grandpapa and I became acquainted with the contents of it. After that, there was nothing for her but to go. It would have looked too brutal to say she did not care whether her dear sister lived or died. But I saw that she could have bitten her tongue off with vexation. You see, if she had had sufficient presence of mind to keep quiet, we need not have known what there was in the telegram.'

"'But her only sister——'

"Peril laughed. 'Really, Mr. Lawford! Well, she went off in great agony; it was like tearing herself bodily away. She said she did not know what in the world he would do without her. He told her—you know how polite and grateful he always is—that she was not so indispensable as she supposed, and that he and I would get on splendidly together. I really thought she would have screamed when she heard that, but she had to conceal her anguish and go. Scarcely had the cab rattled away with her this afternoon, than he called me to him, spoke quite affectionately to me, so that it made my blood run cold to listen to him, and told me to write that note to you. So I did.'

"'And I obeyed with pleasure, though I am at a loss to imagine what he can want with me.'

"'Listen to me,' she said, drawing very close to me, and speaking beneath her breath. 'He is going to ask you questions—about Hugh. He is suspicious. Suspicion is the breath of life to him. Whatever you say, tell him nothing about Hugh which can possibly prejudice him against him.'

"'It may be rather difficult not to do so, if he has made up his mind in advance to be prejudiced against him,' I said. I will own to you, Katty, that I found it a little difficult to keep my head steady, as she stood, having forgotten everything except her one object—with her hands grasping my arm, and that wonderful face gazing into mine. Does she think one is made of granite, or iron? But of course I knew all the time that she did not *think* anything about it. She is over head and ears in love with Hugh; she was thinking of him, and of what was to be done for him. And, as I was under the impression that Mr. Nowell did believe in Hugh, whatever he might think of everybody else, I was bewildered, as well as startled. She seemed to grow impatient at the blank way in which I looked at her, for she gave my arm a little jerk, and said:

"'Don't you understand?'

"'No,' I confessed, 'I don't. What has made him suspicious of Hugh? For, most certainly he trusted him, up to a very short time ago. He trusted him implicitly.'

"She loosed her hold of my arm. Her hands sank down at her sides. I shall never forget the dreadful look on her face, as she said to me:

"'What has made him suspicious? I have made him suspicious.'

"'But my dear Miss Nowell——'

"'Hush! I know all about it. It was last night. I quar-

relled with Hugh—the worst quarrel I ever had with him—I do not mean that we have not said harder things to each other, for we have, many a time. Indeed, he was hardly angry at all. He was a great deal worse—he was forgiving. It was all because of that woman—that Margaret Hankinson, whom he loves—oh, Mr. Lawford, you did not tell me true that night, when you said his love for her was a passing fancy, such as many a man had had for a woman older than himself: it is earnest, it is real. She is his saint upon earth, and the woman whom he loves and wants to marry, too.'

"'I could but say what I thought and believed,' I urged. 'How could I tell? It was what, judging from experience, I supposed must be the case.'

"'It is not the case—and we had this quarrel, though it did not begin about that. And while he was prating about her, I was feeling as if I should go mad. Why, I was mad, I know—perfectly mad. I never felt so horrible in all my life. Why should I pretend to deny it? you must have seen it long ago. He is everything in the world to me—my life, and my hope, and my light; and surely *I* had more reason to expect that he should love me, than that other woman—look at me! was there anything strange in my idea that he might return my love?'

"Katty, instead of being ridiculous, as ninety-nine men and women out of a hundred would have been, in making such a confession, this girl was sublime! There was nothing absurd, nothing weak about her. I should wonder that a lad like Hugh Nowell could have inspired her with such a passion, only I know what a woman—or a man either—will idealise and worship, when they have *nothing else*. That Mrs. Robson is a stupid, silly woman. She might have tamed Peril, and taken away her sting, at the very first, by kindness and firmness. That I will always maintain. I thought out all this, and more, as she stood before me, with her hands spread out, as if to say, 'See, he has rejected this; he has despised *me*.' And at last I said, slowly, but I think with conviction:

"'There was nothing strange about it. The mystery is that it should have turned out otherwise.'

"She scarcely seems to regard me as a person—an individual—more as a machine endowed with a certain degree of intelligence to which she can confide the story of her wrongs.

"'I left him,' she said. 'I rushed upstairs. On the first landing I felt my knees tremble under me. I felt as if I could not get up the other stairs. I went into the drawing-room, and there I saw my grandfather alone.'

"She paused, and then went on, quite composedly, but not with a sort of composure that one cares to see:

"'I walked up to the fireplace. Grandpapa asked me one or two questions, and at last wanted to know why Hugh was going off to London in such a hurry? I said, perhaps he was going to give more assistance to the Hutchinsons——"

"'Oh, Miss Nowell!'

"'You said to me once, that there was danger I might inadvertently say something to Hugh's detriment. I said I could not do so inadvertently. No more I could. I knew quite well what I was saying, and I went on with it, and told him all about Hugh and the Hutchinsons—I wish you would strike me!' she broke in abruptly; 'I wish you would do something to me that I deserve, or call me some name, or something. When I had told him—and if Hugh had been standing there I would have gone on with the same words—I walked away, and left him to meditate upon it, and he has been doing so ever since. They have both gone away. I am here alone with him, and I can see that he is going over everything in his mind, but he does not tell me anything. I think he wants to question you with a view to finding out a few more crimes and enormities of Hugh's. My punishment is coming; I feel it drawing towards me. I do not know what it will be yet, but it is coming—coming, and it will strike me through *him*—I know that. Oh, Mr. Lawford, I am not unreasonable, am I, in asking you to do what you can to uphold Hugh's dear name? I am a very bad, miserable girl, and I have no right whatever to trouble you with my wretched concerns, but you also care for him a little—he is your friend. And the very first time I saw you when he brought you here, I read in your face that you were kind and gentle, and generous, and that is why I appeal to you now.'

"She looked at me with her eyes swimming in tears; her throat choking down the sobs that rose in it. I did not say much. I told her that, so far as I could, I would baffle his cunning, but that I trusted more to his knowledge of Hugh's necessity to him for the preservation of his money than to anything else for keeping him straight. But I would do what I could.

"'Thank you, thank you—God bless you! You are a real friend to one who does not deserve any kindness from you or any one,' she said. 'Now come upstairs. We have been here long enough.'

"I followed her upstairs. She opened the drawing-room door, and said, quite briskly and cheerfully:

"'Grandpapa, here's Mr. Lawford. I'll leave you to have your talk with him,' and so disappeared.

"Now, what the old rascal really wanted with me is more than I can tell, for he asked me very few questions about Hugh. He asked me far more about the office, and about Hankinson, and what I did there, and how much they paid me. He did inquire how long I had known Hugh, and some questions of that kind. He looked vindictive, but he presently dismissed me, and I went away. I greatly desired to see Peril again, but she did not give me the chance, and I had to go away unsatisfied. Whether she thought she had overdone her alarm, and felt ashamed of her excitement and of the confessions she had made; whether she was literally afraid to ask me what had taken place—I don't know, but I did not see her again; and what is brewing in his mind I don't know."

(*Written on the following evening.*)

"We got a grand fright in the office this morning—at least, Hankinson did, if I am not much mistaken. I wonder if he has ever done anything he ought not to have done—in business, I mean. The time at which the alarm occurred was about noon. My desk is in the outer office—not the most distinguished part of the establishment—don't suppose it. But Hankinson had sent for me into his office to speak to me, and I had left the door open. He was telling me about some letters I had to write. Suddenly we heard a little fuss and bustle in the outer office, and then a voice—the voice—the Snarl, of which I have spoken to you before, and which no one could mistake.

"'Well, what are you all doin'?' said this voice. I lifted my head, as one does at an unexpected voice or sound, and I caught sight of Hankinson's face, reflected in a small square looking-glass which hung on the opposite wall. It was ashen-white—ghastly to look at. The flag of fear, or guilt, or apprehension, or something was hung out upon his cheeks, plainly enough to be seen. The only thing is, these flags show the same colour for so many and such very opposite emotions. But there it was, and it startled me, as appearing on the face of a very high-class manager of such very extensive factories. After a moment, it disappeared, and he said, quietly enough, as he placed the bundle of drafts in my hands:

"'Mr. Nowell—he must be much better to have ventured out, and down here on a day like this.'

"Of course it was no place of mine to make any remarks. I held my tongue, and went to my own quarters, meditating a little on what had happened. I met the venerable man face to face; he was buttoned up in huge furs and overcoats. I suppose his poor little mummy of a person was stowed away somewhere inside

them; and as long as the spirit continues to animate it, that mummy *will* have the power to make every one connected with it uncomfortable. He was leaning on the arm of Smith, his man, and condescended to give me a nod and a grunt of recognition. His errand, whatever it might be, was cut short by a paroxysm of bronchitic coughing, which left him gasping and almost fainting. We nearly carried him to his carriage, a hired brougham, which had brought him down; and he was driven away home. How he survived these fits of coughing is more than I can understand. I fancy he will go very soon—may it be before he has had time to accomplish the mischief which Peril affirms he is plotting!"

Preachers of the Day.

At Westminster Abbey, one Sunday afternoon, the present writer overheard a party of Americans appealing earnestly to a verger for sittings near the pulpit: "We are Americans, and we do so want to hear Archdeacon Farrar; we may not have another chance!" The party had come late, so that the verger was unable to accommodate them as they desired; but he offered consolation, saying that the Archdeacon would preach again on the following Sunday. "Ah no, that won't do; we had booked him for to-day," was the answer.

Not long after this the writer was calling upon an American, who had "booked" Canon Liddon for the previous Sunday's religious exercise, and who, on being asked his opinion about that great preacher, volunteered to read some extracts from a letter which he had just written to his brother in Baltimore, conveying his description of the sermon. It was one of those admirable, painstaking letters which Americans, alone of the human race, still write to their brothers—one of those epistles which Trollope's Senator Gotobed is always sending to his distant partner. The effect of it was a little spoilt by an attempted parallel, in the manner of 'Plutarch's Lives,' between the Canon of St. Paul's and a preacher of parochial celebrity in America, a Mr. Stringer (Theodore James); but the general superiority of Dr. Liddon was handsomely allowed, and the American concluded with the acknowledgment that he had heard no such preaching at home, as here in London. "My wife," he said, "wonders how there can be any wicked people in this city with so many fine preachers about."

Few educated Americans leave this country without carrying away with them the recollection of some very edifying half-hours spent under the charm of good preachers' voices; and at this season of Lent it may not be inappropriate for one who, like our cousins, has gone the round of the London churches, to note his impressions of some among the foremost religious teachers of the day. The sectarian doctrines of these various clergymen must be left out of account in such a review, it is only intended to describe the preachers as they appear to the chance occupant of a pew, who has entered their respective churches—not undevoutly indeed, nor in

hypercritical spirit, but with some purpose of weighing what he hears and of observing the manner in which it was delivered. It is one of the greatest boons of residence in London, that a man who scans the list of preachers in Saturday's papers can always provide for himself some of the richest intellectual pleasure, if not instruction, for the following day.

There is no city in the world which offers such a large choice of good preachers; and yet how few pulpit orators of the first order there are, considering that sermons are the principal business of most clergymen, and that every minister ought to regard it as a duty to train himself in elocution. It is very seldom that we are not a little disappointed in the preachers of whom we have heard much praise. In one we miss good delivery; another has a bad voice; a third, with a commanding presence, noble voice and great fluency, has trusted too much to the inspiration of the moment, and utters commonplaces which show that he has not prepared all the points of his discourse beforehand. This want of preparation on the preacher's part is a very trying thing for congregations; and it is a painful thing to say —though we must say it—that too many clergymen mount their pulpits without having given so much thought to what they are going to say as even a third-rate actor gives to his part before stepping on to the stage. Why is this so? Has not the preacher a part to play, and ought not rehearsals and the making of "points" to be matters of professional concern to him as they are with the actor?

Canon Liddon and the Bishop of Peterborough stand out as unquestionably the two first preachers of the Established Church. There is a story of a private soldier having gone to St. Paul's on an afternoon when Dr. Liddon was to preach. The printed paper with the hymn was handed to him, but not understanding that it was offered gratis he refused it with a shake of the head, saying: "You don't suppose I should be here if I had got any money?" Most of the people who go to hear the eloquent Canon are different from this soldier, for they would pay—and very liberally—to get seats near the pulpit. On the afternoons of the Sundays when Dr. Liddon is in residence, the Cathedral presents an extraordinary sight with its huge nave and aisles densely thronged. So far as the preacher's voice will reach, people stand, straining eyes and ears, and fortunately Dr. Liddon's voice resounds well under the dome; though now and then it becomes indistinct through the preacher's speaking too fast in his excitement. Two other things occasionally mar Dr. Liddon's delivery. Shortness of sight makes him often stoop to consult Bible or notes, and again he bows the head in a marked manner when he utters the Holy Name; but when he thus bends he goes on speaking,

so that his words fall on the pulpit-cushion and are deadened, which produces upon people who are at some little distance off, the effect of continual stoppages and gaps in the sermon. No other defects besides these, however, can be noted in orations which for beauty of language, elevation of thought and lucidity in reasoning, could not be surpassed. We have heard Dr. Liddon many times at Oxford and in London, and have observed that the impression produced by his eloquence was always the same, no matter who might be listening to him. We remember, in particular, a sermon of his on the text: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It was absolutely magnificent to hear him prophecy the gradual progress of the world towards a higher state. Every man, from the greatest to the least, was made to feel his share of responsibility in advancing or retarding the evolution of mankind, and while the consequences of evil were pointed out as extending to incalculable lengths, there was a sublime hopefulness in the promise that the smallest good offering brought to the Creator would be multiplied by Him as the "five loaves were multiplied."

Optimism—which is nothing but great faith—pervades Dr. Liddon's preaching. He never leaves his hearers under the apprehension that in any struggle between the good and the bad forces of this world, the bad are going to get the best of it. He knows human nature too well, however, to exaggerate what can be done by any single human being. "The first lesson in true wisdom"—he said in one of his most recent sermons—"is the limited nature of our faculties, the reality and extent of our ignorance;" and there is a curious mixture of religious and mundane philosophy in the following remarks about the presumption of St. Peter, a few minutes before he denied his Master:

"We only weaken ourselves by dwelling upon mischiefs which we cannot hope to remedy. We have only a certain amount of thought, of feeling, of resolve, each one of us, to dispose of. And when this has been expended unavailingly on the abstract, on the intangible, it is expended; it is no longer ours, and we cannot employ it when and where we need it close at home . . . Peter failed as he did, because he had expended his moral strength in words, and had no sufficient force to dispose of when the time came for action and for suffering."

These observations made in a grand sermon, "The Lord was not in the fire," may also be quoted:

"Religious passion carried to the highest point of enthusiasm is a great agency in human life; but religious passion may easily be too inconsiderate, too truculent, too entirely wanting in tenderness and in charity, to be in any sense divine. Christendom has been ablaze again and again

with fires: and those fires are not extinct in our own day and country, of which it may certainly be said that the Lord is not in them."*

The Bishop of Peterborough has not often been heard in London of late years, but whenever he is advertised to preach, crowds flock to hear him. He need not be compared with Liddon, for the personal appearance, style, and opinions of the two men are quite different. But whereas the Canon sometimes preaches above the understanding of dull men, the Bishop's eloquence never soars much above earth. It is a rousing eloquence, spirited, combative, often sarcastic and always directed against some evil which is preoccupying public attention at the time being. Dr. Magee is not merely a hater, but an aggressive enemy of "humbug," clothe itself in what garb it may. With his animated Celtic features, long upper lip, large mouth, energetic nose and shaggy eyebrows, with his gruffness and broad smile which breaks up the whole of his face into comical lines, he has all the look of a humourist. The glance all round which he takes at his congregation when he has got into the pulpit, is that of a master. His first words arrest attention, and if some unlucky man drops a book during his exordium, that man will stare hard at the pulpit and pretend to have no connection whatever with the book, lest his lordship's eyes should suddenly be turned upon him like two fiery points of interrogation. Presently, when the Bishop warms to his work, his arms hit out from the shoulder like piston-rods wrapped in lawn; down come his large hands with great slaps on his book or cushion, and if he is preaching in a church where the beadle has not heard of his little ways and has not been careful to give the cushions a beating, enough dust will be raised to make a fine powdering for the heads of the people in the pew beneath.

The Bishop of Peterborough once said that he "would rather see England free than sober," which amounted to declaring that he would rather men conquered temptation for themselves, than have it removed from their way by legislation which might be oppressive to sober people. His words of course drew a howl from temperance associations, but the inculcation of manliness is the head and front of Dr. Magee's preaching, and he has never swerved from the position that if men cannot be made sober by their own efforts and the encouragements of their friends, the policeman will not make them so. "Don't let us create artificial sins," he once said. "There are plenty of things against which my cook and housemaid must pray to be guarded; don't try and make the poor souls feel wicked because

* Dr. Liddon's politics are puzzling, but always unconventional. He was speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven in a sermon. "Mind, it's a Kingdom," he said, breaking off; "not a Republic."

they enjoy a glass of beer." A young curate, not very long ago, called on the Bishop with a very broad piece of blue ribbon in his button-hole. His lordship took no notice of the ornament, and this evidently disappointed the curate, who kept turning his lappet to the light, till the Bishop opened a New Testament at the passage where the Pharisees are condemned for wearing broad phylacteries. "Let men speak of you as sober," he said, when the curate had digested this little morsel; "you will not need then to advertise yourself as such."

It was in the same spirit that he answered a lady who asked him whether she ought to wear the blue ribbon. "Put it on, by all means, but remember to how much it will pledge you. If men go wrong from drink, girls are more liable to be led astray through love of finery; and if you want to set a good example, give up jewelry, feathers, furs and silks. Dress in unconspicuous stuffs, buy a plain, serviceable bonnet meant for use not show; and mind you keep always to the same fashions, for I assure you a great deal of foolish extravagance arises out of changing fashions."

The lady winced at all this, so the Bishop broke off abruptly: "Then what is the sense of your blue ribbon? I suppose it cost you no effort to give up wine and beer, then why make a virtue of renouncing them?"

Such as Dr. Magee is in his private conversations so is he in the pulpit. Plainspoken and shrewd, discussing all questions with easy arguments, never stooping to subtleties, clear in his delivery, happy in his choice of words, he keeps his hearers bound like Ogmius, that God of Eloquence among the Gauls who used to be represented with chains flowing out of his mouth. On occasions he rises to the highest flights of oratory, but never loses sight of his congregation, who have always been carried along by him through the successive degrees of his own enthusiasm. He should be heard delivering a charity sermon, for this is a duty which he discharges in no perfunctory fashion. He masters his subject thoroughly; speaks of the poor or afflicted for whom he is pleading like one who knows them; and his advice as to supplying their wants is never dictated by eccentric philanthropy, but springs from that true benevolence which has common sense for its source. He was being asked to interest himself in a carpenter's clever young apprentice whom some good people wanted to send to college. "Let him first graduate as a good carpenter," said the Bishop; "when he has become a skilled craftsman, so that he is proud of his trade and can fall back upon it if others fail, then will be the time to see if he is fit for anything better." *

* The Bishop of Peterborough's renown as a parliamentary orator needs no special acknowledgment. He was heard at his best in the House of

A popular vote would probably give the position of third amongst the best preachers of the day to Archdeacon Farrar; but personally we should join the minority on that division. When the author of 'Eric' published his 'Life of Christ,' a writer in the *Spectator* described it as "by a special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*," and it is impossible to get this very neat criticism out of one's mind when hearing Dr. Farrar preach in Westminster Abbey. In his own church of St. Margaret, the Archdeacon shines with a subdued light. Those who have chatted with him by his own fireside, and know him to be the most amiable, unaffected of *causeurs*, those who remember him at Harrow as a most genial boy-loving master, will miss nothing of the good-natured simplicity which they liked in him, if they hear him in his own church discoursing about matters that concern his parish. But in the Abbey he is different. There, his massive face settles into a hard, expressionless look; his voice, which is loud and roughish, is pitched in a monotonous key; and his manner altogether lacks animation, even when his subject imperatively demands it. However, his ornate periods, metaphors, tropes and far-fetched comparisons diffuse ecstasy among those worshippers who derive their wisdom from penny newspapers. To illustrate any common reflection on the vicissitudes of life, the Archdeacon drags in the destruction of Pompeii with the latest mining accident; the overthrow of Darius with that of Osman Digna, the rainbow that appeared to Noah with Mr. Norman Lockyer's explanations of recent glorious sunsets; and all these juxtapositions come down so pat as to suggest the irreverent idea that the book which the venerable preacher was studying during the prayers must have been an annotated copy of Maunders' 'Treasury of Knowledge.'

We believe Dr. Farrar is a total abstainer. One day a gentleman addicted to hard drinking was seated in the smoking-room of an hotel, when a dog walked in. The drinker gave a violent start and shrank back in his chair: upon which a waiter whispered to him reassuringly, "Don't be afraid, sir; it's a real one." This story was related to Dr. Farrar, and gave him, it is said, an utter loathing for strong drinks which can destroy the mind and convert a man into a palsied sot. It need scarcely be said that the drinker in the smoking-room was afflicted with delirium-tremens. Alexander Dumas, the younger, offers an analogous case of a man being suddenly startled out of the

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Lords last session when he said that there was no chance of the Church being reformed, for there were too many persons in the political world interested in seeing its abuses flourish, in order that these might discredit the Church. The Nonconformists had been called the backbone of the Liberal party, and the Liberals dared not deal fairly by the Church, "for fear of irritating their great backbone."

temperate use of a thing by a ghastly story. About twenty years ago, a French doctor told him of a horrible instance of tongue-cancer which he had seen result from over-smoking. Dumas was smoking a cigar at the time; he threw it away half-finished, and has never lit another.

Dr. Barry, Bishop of Sydney, is no longer with us, or we might class him with Dr. Farrar as a preacher of the florid school. The habit of addressing boys, while it gives a man great assurance in the pulpit, also inclines his style to unconscious pedantry. Dr. Farrar was head-master of Marlborough; Dr. Barry of Cheltenham; the latter, like the former, could never quite shake off the ways of the *didaskalos* who has to show sharp Sixth Form boys that he is well up in his authors, and to make the little ones in the Fourth feel utterly ashamed of their crass ignorance. Archdeacon Farrar, however, may be compared to that eminent artificer, Signor Ruggieri, who discharges the fireworks in Paris on national holidays, and does so with an unmoved countenance; while Dr. Barry, on the contrary, always seemed to watch with eager eyes the flight of his oratorical squibs and Roman candles. For all that, few preachers have such a command of neat, graceful English as Dr. Barry. He speaks better than he writes, and he possesses the great art of moving his hearers, "without," as the present Archbishop of Canterbury said of him, "harrowing the field he has ploughed."

As we are talking of head-masters we may take two others, the Dean of Llandaff and Mr. E. C. Wickham, in both of whom is found the best scholarly preaching without mannerism. Dean Stanley when dying requested that his funeral sermon might be preached by Dr. Vaughan. The Master of the Temple alluding soon afterwards to his dead friend, spoke with emotion of the Dean's having emphatically expressed his belief in the Trinity. Dean Stanley owed it to his excessive latitudinarianism that his beliefs were often called in question, and it may be said of Dr. Vaughan that his creed contains articles more definite than that of his friend. Without applying to him that term "Broad" which has come to mean so many obnoxious things, we may call him "tolerant," in the best sense which can be attached to that term as implying the highest kind of enlightenment. His sermons are free from controversial bitterness; they seldom indeed touch on controvertible points. But they are not meat for babes. Dr. Vaughan preaches for men. He bears himself in the pulpit with the dignity of a man who reorganised a great public school and has twice refused bishoprics. While vicar of Doncaster, he tried hard to get the races removed from the town—an enterprise in which he failed of course, but it was a sign of an amazing amount of moral courage in him to have undertaken it.

Courage is the mainspring of his character. When he became head-master of Harrow, the school had less than seventy boys, and the conduct of these was so bad that he had serious thoughts of expelling them in a body. He resisted this first impulse, set to work, disciplined his scholars, remodelled the school, and left it, after fifteen years, the rival of Eton and Rugby. A man who has done this does not recoil from tasks that would daunt ordinary men, and when Dr. Vaughan lifted up his voice at Doncaster against the races, which every year brought into the town for one week dissipation and vice enough to undo most of the good which he, as vicar, strove to effect during the other fifty-one weeks, he knew that he would incur great unpopularity. But for this he cared not a birch-twig. The lessons of such a man must needs be fortifying. In the round church of the Temple, Dr. Vaughan addresses congregations which no second-rate preacher could attract. Lawyers of all degrees, from the judge to the late-called junior, go to hear him, and the lesson he most often impresses upon them all is to *dare*—to do what seems most difficult, most detrimental to oneself when conscience says it ought to be done, and to await the consequences with a quiet, manly faith that the best will come of it.

Like the Dean of Llandaff, Mr. Wickham preaches for men, but more particularly for scholars. He has the ascetical features of a young monk—thin cheeks, sunken eyes, denuded forehead, and not the ghost of a smile ever hovers on his lips in the pulpit. He looks as if he had just left a cell full of books and were going to return to it immediately after the service. He carries himself well, with head erect, steadfast gaze, and no sign of nervousness in his manner. His calm delivery is admirable. Never stumbling at a word, clear in his articulation, self-possessed in all his gestures, he appears to be reciting his sermon by heart; but in what he says there is always an appositeness which would be wanting in sermons learnt by rote. A sporting peer gave his opinion of Mr. Wickham, saying: "He's very good form; one never hears 'My Christian brethren,' or anything of that kind from him." Impersonality is Mr. Wickham's "form;" he never says "I," and seldom "you." He seems to be revealing truths to the world, not lecturing an audience beneath his pulpit; he is a mouthpiece speaking from inspiration and sinking his individuality altogether.

Mr. Wickham is to be heard occasionally at St. Paul's. It is to be regretted that the Dean of the Cathedral only preaches there four times a year, though Dr. Church's sermons are rather meant to be read than listened to. They are treatises too full of learning and thought to be delivered orally, for they require that the reader should rivet his attention on every sentence of them; moreover, the Dean

has not a well trained voice, and his general manner in the pulpit does no justice to the matter of his discourses.

The gifts that make a preacher popular with the vast congregations of St. Paul's appear in no man more conspicuously than in Canon Hole, of Lincoln. This most agreeable preacher realises one's conception of what a Court chaplain ought to be; but as in these days the sovereign people like to be addressed as kings were of old, a preacher with honeyed phrases is sure to be thought delightful. There is nothing spontaneous in the Canon's oratory; it is all art, and high art. He abounds in quotations from the poets; he suits the action to the word with gestures that have all been studied. Now he lays one hand on his breast and looks upward at the dome while he repeats some majestic verses from the late Lord Derby's translation of Homer's 'Iliad'; now he brings the ample sleeves of his surplice together, and folding his hands as he leans right over the pulpit, smiles radiantly at his congregation and dismisses them with a tender couplet from Robert Browning. There never was such a voice as Canon Hole's for modulations; it compasses every octave from the deep note of the bassoon to the softest tremolo of the silver flute. As for his sermons in their entirety, they are like beautiful, philanthropical essays of which the author has laboriously corrected the printed proofs—there is not a mistake in them, not even a point of admiration misplaced. Of pictures so carefully retouched as Canon Hole's sermons are, the French say: "C'est de la peinture trop léchée." But we are not going to admit that the Canon's sermons are "too much licked." If the art in them is too apparent, it is at least something that art should be bestowed so conscientiously in the preparation of sermons.

Canon Duckworth is a Court preacher *de facto*. We have not mentioned his name in the order which we should assign to it by merit, for it certainly deserves a place in the first rank. A noble face, a charming voice, a persuasive tone, and a fluency which comes from a full heart as well as a full mind, combine to make of Dr. Duckworth a preacher very pleasing to hear. Pleasing is perhaps an inadequate word. The sensations which Dr. Duckworth kindles, though not violent, are strong and lasting. An accomplished scholar, a deep thinker, a masterly logician, he can give reasons for his faith which will not only satisfy the reverent inquirer who wants to have his belief strengthened, but will trouble the agnostic; and when he makes appeals to the heart he says things that will move even hardened society-men of the Major Pendennis type, and women like Becky Sharpe. He is one of those clergymen to whom belongs the great credit of having propagated religious earnestness, which is a very different thing from religious zeal, among the aristocracy. The zeal

which finds vent in ostentatious giving of money, in the noisy championship of orthodoxy, and in the multiplication of religious observances, is always within the compass of the rich like any other mode of recreation. But the quiet, steadfast earnestness which shows itself in the gracious life, in charity of word, in the constant respect of holy things, and in the godly bringing up of children, this is a virtue that has not always been seen, as it is now, among a very considerable section of the rich. And men, who, like Canon Duckworth, have striven to promote this virtue and have succeeded, must be held to have had no small part in ennobling the national life.

Exactly the same praise belongs to Dr. Wilkinson, Bishop of Truro. It is impossible to compute the good which Mr. Wilkinson did during the years he was vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square. A High Churchman, an Oxford man, and a spiritual son, as one may well call him, of John Henry Newman, he is nevertheless essentially a priest of the Church of England, and there has never been any reason to fear that he would sever his connection with it. The mission which he set himself to discharge in his aristocratical parish was no easy one. A forcible preacher, he attracted from the first large congregations to his church; but this did not satisfy him, for he aimed at exciting something more than curiosity,—he wanted to awaken an active religiousness among his hearers, and to do this he had to exert all the tact and urbanity at his command. Largely endowed with both, he succeeded where a man less versed in the ways of the world might have failed. Lay organisations of all sorts sprang up around his church to assist him in his work, and he was speedily in a position to feel that he was truly the guide of his parish. But to speak of him only as a preacher, we may say that his able, scholarly discourses, while so couched as to soothe rather than to alarm, were always interspersed with little sparks of humour which threw a ridiculous light upon the smaller and meaner vices, selfishness, conceit, indolence and stinginess. Dr. Wilkinson knows how to make the great ashamed of the faults that are unworthy of their position. His texts generally tend to the moral, *Noblesse oblige;* and his exhortations, both as to conduct in private life and in public policy, might be summed up in Tennyson's stirring lines :

> "Pray God our greatness may not fail
> Through craven fears of being great."

From a man who knows the "great world" of London we may pass to one who knows the world as a traveller of almost unique experience. Dr. Henry Lansdell, the author of 'Through Siberia,' is a disciple of Howard. Trained for the ministry at St. John's College, Highbury, he was ordained in 1867, and from that time began to

make annual voyages. His * sermons are of powerful interest because his adventures have supplied him with an inexhaustible fund of reminiscences, facts and anecdotes, upon which he can draw to enforce his precepts. It is something to hear a man who has been to Khiva and come away safe and sound, who has seen Siberia and pushed his explorations in all other lands quite beyond the ordinary track of tourists. Dr. Lansdell prepares his sermons with unusual care, for he makes it his rule, whenever possible, to devote thirty hours to the composition of them—that is, six hours a day for five days. If he is to preach on a Sunday he will on the previous Monday choose his text generally from the portions of Scripture to be read on the Sunday, and will then read up all that has been written on that text by Bible commentators. On the Tuesday he will write out a rough draft of his sermon; on the Wednesday make a fair copy of it, adding what improvements he can. On the Thursday he will learn the sermon by heart; and on the Friday rehearse it to himself and think upon it, after which the manuscript is locked up; for Dr. Lansdell preaches without notes. We mention all this by way of showing what respect a high-principled man will feel for any work he undertakes, and we can only wish those presumptuous preachers whose favourite text appears to be "Take no thought what ye shall speak," would follow Dr. Lansdell's example, and remember that inspiration is only vouchsafed to those who seek it diligently.

Highbury College has brought us to the north of London, where we may look in at St. James's, Holloway. This church, in a squalid neighbourhood, at the corner of the Liverpool Road, has been fortunate in having three remarkable vicars in succession, the late Mr. Mackenzie, Canon Boyd-Carpenter, and the Rev. E. A. Stuart. Canon Boyd-Carpenter now holds the living of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate. Evangelical in his tenets, an enthusiastic worker in the cause of Temperance,† an indefatigable administrator of charitable organisations, he has left a record of splendid work at Holloway, and he now continues these labours in his wealthier parish. As a preacher he is very popular, and there can be no better illustration of the words, "Diversities of gifts but the same Spirit," than in the circumstance that Canon Boyd-Carpenter and Mr. Wilkinson

* Mr. Henry Lansdell received the degree of D.D. from Archbishop Tait in 1881.

† We should have mentioned that Dr. Lansdell is a total abstainer, but he makes no fuss about the matter, and wears no blue ribbon. He has never touched strong drink from his boyhood, and this fact is more noticeable in his case than in that of most men, since he has travelled so much in climates where one would think stimulants are almost necessary. But even in Siberia he never felt, as he says, a desire for drink stronger than tea.

should have wielded just the same sort of influence in their respective parishes, though they are so little alike. In Canon Boyd-Carpenter the Low Churchman can be discerned at a glance. No High Churchman deals in the style of oratory to which the Canon inclines. He is rhetorical, emotional, now lowering his voice to the tone of familiar conversation, now taking grand flights upwards into clouds of mysticism. It is a spasmodic style, but effective: it blows in gusts like a high wind, and there is no sitting inattentive in the face of it. There is too much of the personal pronoun in it to please the fastidious, for the reiteration of "I," and "My," "My brethren," "My dear brethren," "My Christian brethren," &c., ends by tiring those who hold that a preacher should practise self-effacement.

If Mr. E. A. Stuart can discard some of the mannerisms of the Evangelical school, he will before long attain to the highest reputation among preachers. He has some natural gifts which fit him preeminently for the ministry, and these have been well supplemented by the education he received at Harrow and Cambridge. About ten years ago he was captain of the Harrow School eleven, and afterwards he pulled stroke of the college boat, St. John's, but his devotion to athletics did not interfere with his theological studies, and before leaving the University he was already noted for his abundant knowledge of the Scriptures. A most handsome young man, tall, broad-shouldered, of dark complexion, with a beaming face, resolute and yet gentle, his appearance is prepossessing in no common degree; but when he opens his mouth to read or speak, the great beauty of his voice exercises a most potent charm. A careful elocutionist, he has learnt how to manage his voice, and he has certainly no superior in London as a reader. Even the Litany seems short when read by him, so heartfelt is the expression which he throws into each prayer. As a preacher, too, Mr. Stuart when at his best is excellent, but he is rather unequal in the pulpit, some of his sermons bearing traces of haste in composition. Moreover, he is too much given to saying "Methinks," "Now it is *my* opinion," &c. But he will grow out of these faults, and when he has done so his voice will reach far.

Another great Evangelical preacher, Mr. W. H. Aitken, calls for notice. A Cornishman brought up among miners at Pendeen, where his father was rector, he was trained for the ministry from his youth, and is the founder of the Parochial Mission Society, which supplies clergymen with preachers when they may be wanted for any special work. Mr. Disraeli heard Mr. Aitken some years ago at the Curzon Chapel, Mayfair, and was so much struck by his sermon that he at once offered him the vicarage of Halifax, which Mr. Pigou, another first-rate preacher, now holds. Mr. Aitken is as a Daniel in the pulpit; but the flaming energy of his style can rather be

imagined than described. Once he went to preach at Christ Church, Barnet. The vicar of that church had lately had a handsome silk gown presented to him by his parishioners; and the clerk asked whether Mr. Aitken was to wear this new gown or an older one. "Give him the new gown, of course," said the vicar. But he had not taken into account the exuberance of his visitor's gestures, so it came to pass before long that the right-hand sleeve of the new gown being tossed wildly about, got caught in the gas-bracket, and a rent a foot long was the result. "We'll give him the old gown next time, sir," whispered the clerk after the service.

From Mr. Aitken to Mr. Haweis, the descent is considerable, but it is only one of temperature. The missionary is ardent; the Vicar of St. James's, Marylebone, is nothing if not cool, and his coolness is not like that of still air, but searching as an east wind; and, to some, as irritating. About a year ago, Mr. Haweis announced that he was going to introduce some changes into the ritual. The Lord's Prayer would only be said once at Morning and Evening Service, there would be but one creed, one prayer for the Queen, &c. The time gained by this Prayer Book revision, undertaken with the high sanction of Mr. Haweis's churchwardens, has of course gone to the enlargement of the sermon; but nobody complains, for there is never a dull sentence in what the preacher says. His voice, though small, and in tone like a clarionet, is penetrating, one might say perforating, for it works its way in gimlet fashion to the farthermost corner of the dark little church, and going through the ears of each one, bores into his mind unfailingly. Of delivery there is nothing that can be so called in Mr. Haweis's style; his intonation is throughout as if he were giving out notices. He kindles sometimes, but he never warms. He is not anxious to keep his hearers in the old paths where they may find rest for their souls; he beckons them towards unexplored declivities, and is so sure that they will follow from curiosity, that he has no need to excite himself. He is a Radical; he has campaigned with Garibaldi; he has written on cremation, on democracy—what else has he not done? It would require a trumpeter to flourish it all, but Mr. Haweis is too good a musician himself to keep a hired performer. At one time he was chaplain of a volunteer corps, but one day that corps having been appointed to muster at a certain place, failed to put in an appearance because it rained, and Garibaldi's friend would have nothing more to do with soldiers who feared to be wetted. He is superior to common weaknesses, like most of his political school, and goes in manliness to the point of thinking that every age ought to buy its own experience instead of accepting the same as a legacy from generations which may be have had to buy it too dear. He hates restraints on "the

people" as much as a progressive Dutchman who had never seen a flood might dislike dykes, and question their uses; and against popular distemper he is as well persuaded as Mr. Bright that "Force is no remedy." Water never quenched fire, fire never burned stick, stick never beat dog to good purpose yet, and never will. This is the new faith. *Ainsi soit-il!*

There used to be at Berlin, at about the time when Mr. Stopford Brooke was chaplain to the British Embassy in that capital, a preacher much like Mr. Haweis in opinions—a pastor, Conrad Löbbeke, of whom Prince Bismarck said: "He is always for unchaining my dog and giving him *your* dinner. I know two sorts of Liberals," added the Prussian statesman, laughing, "both of whom think it cruel to keep a mastiff tied. One would loosen the beast, to muzzle him and make him draw a cart; the other, after taking the dog's chain off, would scream to me to shoot him for being mad."* Let us hope things will never so happen that Mr. Haweis will be asked: Who shot the dog?

We have named Mr. Stopford Brooke, and would we could speak of him as being still in the Church of England. He officiates at the Bedford Chapel in Bloomsbury Street, of which the late Rev. J. C. M. Bellew was once the incumbent. We have some boyish recollections of Mr. Bellew, his fine silvery head and ever youthful face, his voice of ringing clearness, his exquisite sentiment in reading, and his dramatic delivery in the pulpit which could keep even a boy's nerves in a thrill of excitement. The church was always full in Mr. Bellew's days; it was crowded morning and evening whether he preached or simply read the Lessons, and it remained so until he went over to Rome, taking several of his faithful with him, after leading them through the regular preliminary course of Ritualism. Mr. Brooke has not the histrionic abilities of Mr. Bellew, nor his voice, nor his vestments—for Mr. Bellew's surplices and hoods were things to see—but he is a better preacher than his predecessor, and yet we have heard him preach before scanty evening congregations which scarcely filled half the floor of the church, and left the large galleries dark and empty. He seemed to feel his abandonment, and preached like an ill-used man. Where was the fashionable flock that gathered round him when he was the shepherd of St. James's, York Street, and

* M. Laffitte, in 1831, "begged pardon of gods and men" for having promoted the revolution of 1830: M. Jules Favre, in 1871, likewise with tears in his eyes, begged pardon of gods and men for not having consented to Prince Bismarck's proposal for disarming the National Guard of Paris. When M. Gustave Chaudey, the Republican journalist, was being led to execution by Raoul Rigault and a Communist rabble, he exclaimed: "I have spent my life in trying to make you free!" He also, poor fellow, repented of having "unchained the dog."

seemed destined beyond doubt to become the wielder some day of an episcopal crook? Mr. Brooke has not succeeded in founding a sect of any importance, and he seems to be, if he is not in reality, a disappointed schismatic. His sorrowful air moves the heart of ladies, but men are sometimes so unintelligent as to ask what is the matter with him that he should so often turn up his eyes towards the ceiling and speak "*avec des larmes dans la voix*," as our neighbours say. Once get accustomed to his lackadaisical manner, make allowance for his propensity to talk about religious persecution as if he were himself among the martyrs; strip, in short, the husks from Mr. Brooke's sermons, and you will sometimes find the kernel solid and shapely. His poetical imagery, if a little over-coloured, is always fine. His descriptions of things, scenery, thunderstorms, battle-fields, convulsions of Nature, and his sketches of character, are most vivid. He is an incomparable word-painter. He is also a good, warm-hearted man, who, when pleading for the poor in this great city, is always stirred with genuine emotion. We can only regret again that his voice should sound so often in a desert of empty pews.

Mr. Haweis has condensed the Church Service; Mr. Voysey has altogether reformed the Prayer Book. The concert-room which he has turned into a conventicle is much patronised by American sojourners at the Langham Hotel hard by, and such visitors generally go away well pleased with the performance—we mean service.

Admission gratis; but there is a bookstall at the door, from which the printed wisdom of Mr. Voysey can be purchased in quantities costing from a penny to two shillings. Inside the room there are comfortable chairs and a stage with a reading desk, and presently the *genius loci*, a man with lank hair and a moist smile, walks on to the stage, attired in an ordinary surplice, stole, and an Oxford hood. He has a good voice and reads impressively the beginning of a service, which a visitor who has not had time to study the reformed Prayer Book, thinks at first to be that of the Church of England; but soon the omission of everything which forms the ground of a Christian's faith is observable, and the outlines of Mr. Voysey's theism are then seen. The service is cut up into small parts; the singing by a male and female choir is very fair; the lessons consist of passages from Scripture or from some American author as the occasion may serve, the equal inspiration of all good writers being apparently implied by this eclecticism; then we have a Litany, in which editors of newspapers and other periodical publications are prayed for. It is certain that these gentlemen require "grace, wisdom, and understanding" as much as the "Lords of the Council and all the nobility," and no one will quarrel with Mr. Voysey for laying a significant stress on his prayer in their behalf.

Nor is there reason to quarrel with him for anything else he says or does. He is at home in his music-room, and those who go in had better regard him only as a lecturer. If he talks on religion they can say, as Lamb said of Coleridge: "It's only his fun." As a lecturer on the moralities he is always entertaining; he speaks in a polished, gentlemanly tone, is brief, often funny, and he is devoid of rancour towards his enemies. After the service he makes haste to throw off his surplice, and comes to the door to shake hands with his principal visitors as they are filing out. It is pleasant to see him so affable; he has probably more friends than disciples.

There are many other good preachers of whom we might still speak —Canon Fleming; Mr. Kitto; Mr. Horsley, the Chaplain of the Prison of Clerkenwell; Mr. Knox-Little, who has just been appointed to St. Paul's; and Dr. Kitchin, Dean of Winchester. Coming to others again of lesser note, we could name several, who, if they were Dissenters, would enjoy great reputation in their respective sects, but who in the Church of England occupy the second rank, because the preaching force of the Establishment is undoubtedly superior to that of the Nonconformist bodies. This must be ascribed to the freedom which exists in the Anglican communion. A Nonconformist was once bandying words with a curate about Episcopacy. "I should not care to live subject to a Bench of Bishops," he observed.

"But is there no authority over you?" asked the curate.

"Only a Board," was the answer.

"Well, what's a board except a bench with no legs to stand upon?"

The truth is, the Anglican rector or vicar, who cannot be removed from his benefice save for flagrant heresy or misconduct by any power in the land; the Bishop, who owes no obedience to anybody, who cannot be scolded by the Primate, or have his emoluments curtailed by Government,—are both for practical purposes much more comfortably situated than Nonconformist ministers, who have been elected by their congregations, and are controlled by officious bodies of Elders and Deacons. Making every allowance for the benefits which the best preachers of the Establishment have derived from University education and associations, it still remains manifest to any one who has acquired his experience *de visu et auribus* that the tone of preaching is lower in chapels than in churches. There is less Catholicity about it; you can never be sure of what an Anglican clergyman is going to say when he mounts the pulpit; he may proclaim toleration of the broadest kind, acknowledging Christian workers of all sects whatsoever to be in fellowship; but the Dissenter dare not be so tolerant. He would have a pretty time of it with his Board if he

owned that any good had ever come from Rome, and even if he is drawn into praising anything in connection with the Established Church, the praise is too often bestowed grudgingly and with ill-grace. Yet a Church which includes members so various in their opinions as Archbishop Benson and Mr. Haweis, Bishop Wilkinson and Mr. Stanley Leathes, is scarcely open to the charge so frequently laid against it by Dissenters of being tyrannically ruled.

Mr. Spurgeon stands head and shoulders above all the Nonconformist preachers. Somebody once expressed a regret that the great Baptist minister was not a member of the Establishment, to which the late Bishop of Winchester answered by quoting a portion of the tenth Commandment. But Mr. Spurgeon was much more aggressive in those days than he is now; he has softened much of late years, and Churchmen can go to hear him without fear of being offended. On the days when he preaches his Tabernacle holds a multitude. It is a huge hall, and to see gallery upon gallery crowded with eager faces—some six thousand—all turned towards the pastor whose voice has the power of troubling men to the depths of their hearts, is a stirring sight. Mr. Spurgeon's is not a high-class congregation, and the preacher knows that its understanding can best be opened by metaphors and parables borrowed from the customs of the retail trade, and with similes taken from the colloquialisms of the streets. Laughter is not forbidden at the Tabernacle, and the congregation often break into titters, but the merriment is always directed against some piece of hypocrisy which the preacher has exposed, and it does one good to hear. He says:

"You are always for giving God short measure, just as if He had not made the pint pot."

"You don't expect the Queen to carry your letters for nothing, but when you are posting a letter heavenwards you won't trouble to stick a little bit of Christian faith on to the right-hand corner of the envelope, and you won't put a correct address on either, and then you wonder the letter isn't delivered, so that you don't get your remittance by next post."

"You trust Mr. Jones to pay you your wages regularly, and you say he's a good master, but you don't think God can be trusted like Mr. Jones; you won't serve Him because you don't believe in the pay."

"You have heard of the man who diminished his dose of food every day to see on how little he could live, till he came to half a biscuit and then died; but, I tell you, most of you have tried on how little religion you could live, and many of you have got to the half-biscuit dose."

These whimsicalities, always effective, constitute but the foam of Mr. Spurgeon's oratory; the torrent which casts them up is broad, deep and of overwhelming power. Mr. Spurgeon is among preachers as Mr. Bright among parliamentary orators. All desire to criticise vanishes, every faculty is subdued into admiration, when he has con-

cluded a sermon with a burst of his truly inspired eloquence, leaving the whole of his congregation amazed and the vast majority of its members anxious or hopeful, but in any case roused as if they had seen the heavens open. We are compelled to add that Mr. Spurgeon has in the Baptist communion no co-minister wielding a tenth of his power, and that those who, having gone to the Tabernacle to hear him, have to listen to some other man, will be disappointed in more ways than one.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, one of the authors of the Methodist Temperance Hymn Book, holds an honourable place among rising Wesleyan preachers; and so does Mr. Jackson Wray, of Whitefield's Tabernacle, who now, however, has joined the Congregationalists. Among Presbyterians may be noticed Mr. J. Oswald Dykes, of Regent's Square, and Dr. Gibson, of St. John's Wood, whose church, by the way, is next door to Mr. Huxley's house. Dr. Dykes, a dark, stooping, studious minister with a very scholarly face, was for some time assistant to Dr. Candlish, the Scottish Boanerges; but he is not himself a "thunderer," he is more persuasive than fervid, and his arguments always strike home for being so perfectly tempered by thought. Dr. Gibson has a rather cultivated congregation with several artists in it, and one of these, a distinguished R.A., is understood to have been converted, by a couple of sermons, from very rampant Agnosticism. Dr. Gibson, though an Englishman, was for many years the leading Presbyterian minister at Chicago, U.S., and he has much of the American style in his delivery, though nothing of the drawl. His beginnings are argumentative, slowly and cautiously so; his perorations impassioned, but from first to last he knows what he is saying.

There are some who have called Mr. Newman Hall an American preacher; but though allusions to things American are frequent in the sermons which he preaches under the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial Tower, he is heartily English in thought and speech. The service at his church is much like that of the Establishment, and Mr. Hall wears an Anglican surplice; but the enormous size of his pulpit warns you from the threshold that preaching is the matter of chief moment here. Extempore praying is but a variety of preaching. An enthusiastic reporter once wrote of Mr. Newman Hall that "he had delivered the finest prayer ever addressed *to a congregation*." Mr. Hall's extempore prayers, however, are not frequent, nor do they go to the severe length of Scotch prayers. A stern-looking man with a Wellington nose and an expression like a college don's, Mr. Newman Hall missed his vocation in being a Nonconformist and a Liberal. By nature he is autocratic; the love of authority and of discipline pierces in sharp peremptory words like bayonet points

through the commonplace sentiments of his professed Liberalism. He should have been the head of a college, or a dean if not a bishop, though he would have doubtless found his most congenial sphere of action—little as he may suspect it—in a colonelship of Dragoons. Mr. Hall is only a great preacher when he has great objects to preach for; in times when there is not much doing, no big grievances to denounce, no "sinful, illiberal national policy" to inveigh against, his faculties take a rest. He is then like a lion making war upon flies, with rather lazy movements and a sort of yawning shame at being engaged in such poor sport.

Dr. Parker, of the City Temple, holds a place apart among Dissenters. If you can forgive a bad delivery with occasional dropping of aspirates, and the incessant introduction of Gladstonian politics in connection with holy things, you will find in Dr. Parker's sermons much that is impressive and certainly a great deal that is novel. The preacher wants to illustrate the case of a human being who has been taken in hand by Divine Providence, he pitches his voice in a solemn key and says: "Many years ago, a poor ragged boy seated himself at an early hour of the morning on the cold doorstep of a New York newspaper office, asked for and obtained work to sweep out the office, and in time the lad became——" Here the chance intruder into Dr. Parker's Temple is all ears, and wonders what the lad became. Then the preacher goes on triumphantly, "and the lad became Horace Greeley, the most famous and trenchant writer on the press of his country, and the prince of American journalists." The absurdity of this anti-climax does not strike Dr. Parker or anybody else present; and this is enough by itself to show how far we are from St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, and to make us feel how difficult it is to judge preachers outside the Establishment by the same canons of taste as we apply to those within it.

In an Old Bookshop.

A CALM retreat, that breathes of rest
To toil-worn City mortals;
Where e'en the uninvited guest
May cross its mystic portals:—

Just such a spot I chance to know,
And there I often linger,
To pass a quiet hour or so,
With some forgotten singer.

There—hid beneath the dust of Time—
A poet lay reposing;
Entombed within his ancient rhyme
The child of song was dozing.

He may have sung, for Love's sweet sake,
In wretched, uncouth numbers;
If so, 'twere no glad task to wake
The minstrel from his slumbers.

Yet, when with careful hand I took
That volume—vellum-covered—
It seemed as if around the book
A subtle fragrance hovered.

Soft melodies of oaten reeds
Meandered thro' its pages;
God Pan, beside the river-weeds,
Recalled the mythic ages.

Coy, graceful nymphs, of birth divine,
Played in enchanted bowers;
And Pluto stole fair Proserpine
From Enna's field of flowers.

Ran thro' the verse a sad refrain,
An undertone of sorrow,
As of a hopeless heart, that fain
Some ease from song would borrow.

I read the faded title-leaf—
What designation quainter?—
'The Lyrics of a Soul-felt Grief,'
By Claude Romano, Painter!"

But more to me than goddess fair,
Or antiquated fable,
A captive lock of auburn hair
Athwart some "Lines to Mabel!"

A sunbeam glow, it lightly lay
Upon the grim, black letters;
A dainty little elfin-fay,
Fast bound in golden fetters!

Then swift an airy spirit sped
From memory's deep recesses,
And broke the bonds: a radiant head
Rose, crowned by auburn tresses;—

A girlish head, with two blue eyes
That ope'd in maiden wonder;
Two red lips, framed for low replies;
A dimpled chin thereunder!

Perchance, in other days, that face—
What limner's skill could show it?—
Had beamed, in all its youthful grace,
Upon our artist-poet,

Who sought in vain for Love's fond smile,
And then—his passion bringing
No recompense—had tried to wile
The sombre hours with singing!

Thus Fancy spake; 'twas sure no sin
The tear that fell, unbidden,
As I replaced the book wherein
A human heart was hidden!

EDWIN C. SMALES.

Madame Tallien.

François Cabarrus was a native of Bayonne; but early in life he moved to Madrid, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits. In these he prospered, amassed wealth, and in time was given by the Spanish Government the Directorship of the Bank of Saint Charles. Business took him to Paris in the winter of 1788. He was then a widower. His only daughter, Theresia, accompanied him on the journey. Theresia Cabarrus was a beauty: her raven-black hair, dark lustrous eyes, and brilliant complexion, were perfect; her nose was the one feature to which exception could be taken; it was turned up at the end. Years afterwards, when enemies were leagued together to disparage her, this "tip-tilted" nose served as a point of attack.

But her beauty apart, Theresia was eminently attractive. Her liveliness, her good-nature, her irresistible smile, drew around her a crowd of admirers. She had an ambition to shine in society, and, with that view, she cultivated the art of appearing to know much more than she really did. Lastly, it was understood that her father, if she made a suitable marriage, was prepared to give her a handsome dowry. She was not long in finding a husband. Among the many proposals she received, that of M. de Fontenay, a *Conseiller au Parlement* at Paris, seemed the most eligible. At the age of eighteen, she became Madame de Fontenay. Very little is known of her husband; but he is described by her biographers as a selfish libertine, who sought her less for herself than for her money. This may or may not be true. It is quite as likely that his young wife had been brought up with lax notions of morality, and that she gave herself no trouble to win his esteem.

France was now in a volcanic condition. The storm of revolution was about to burst. Madame de Fontenay, when not too much absorbed by worldly frivolities, discussed politics with eager glibness. Her sympathies were in favour of liberty, and in this she differed from her husband and his family, who were all staunch Conservatives—a fact which may have helped to widen the breach between them. Her political opinions were formed

on those of Messieurs Félix Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau and Charles de Lameth, with both of whom she was on terms of the closest intimacy. These men were ardent Revolutionists, and in their society Madame de Fontenay consoled herself for the absence of her husband.

When the Revolution burst in full fury, the Commune was triumphant, and the lives of aristocrats in peril, M. de Fontenay followed the example of too many others, and emigrated, leaving his spouse to look out for herself. One of the last Acts passed by the Legislative Assembly decreed that "if one of a married couple, living apart at the time, emigrated, the other could claim a divorce." Madame de Fontenay at once availed herself of this Act, to obtain hers. She remained in Paris for some months; but, as time went on, a misunderstanding arose between her and her friend Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, who was a member of the Convention. To forfeit his good-will, just then, was dangerous. The moment was one of general mistrust. All things considered, she judged it prudent to quit Paris, and pay a visit to her father at Madrid. She proceeded in safety as far as Bordeaux, where she rested a few days. She found the inhabitants of that town in the utmost consternation. Two deputies from Paris had been sent there, instructed by the Convention to institute a reign of terror similar to that existing at Lyons or Nantes. These deputies were Tallien and Ysabeau.

Jean Lambert Tallien was a man of low origin, but had received a fair education. While still a boy, he was employed as copying-clerk, first by an attorney, then by a notary; and later on, the deputy Broustaret made him his secretary. It was while acting subsequently as compositor at a printing-office that he undertook the editorship of a single-sheet journal entitled the *Ami des Citoyens*, wherein ultra-Republican principles were advocated. In 1791, when the attempted flight of the Royal Family from France had failed, his journal, till then obscure, made itself conspicuous by the heat with which it clamoured for the deposition of Louis XVI. He took an active part in promoting the outbreak on the 10th of August in the following year; and when, on that day, the self-instituted Commune assembled at the Hôtel de Ville, he was appointed its registrar. In this capacity he displayed a ferocious zeal. He is accused, with good cause, of having planned the massacres perpetrated between the 2nd and 5th September, for, in most cases, the orders of arrest which had previously filled the prisons, bore his signature. To him too, it is said, was delivered the property found on the victims—property which (according to

Sénart) he kept for a time under lock and key, and afterwards appropriated. In the new Convention, he represented the department of Seine-et-Oise. Here he urgently demanded that the King should be brought to trial, and opposed his being allowed to see his family. Finally, at the trial, he voted for the King's death, and against an appeal to the people. His influence contributed to the downfall of the Girondists. When the surviving members of that party escaped from Paris, and sought refuge at Bordeaux, he was chosen to proceed there and hunt them down, as well as to extirpate Royalism generally, and extort money from the wealthy natives. He, and his colleague Ysabeau, carried out their instructions with sanguinary vigour. Establishing themselves first at La Réole, some miles off, they issued their edicts thence; but as soon as the inhabitants of Bordeaux had been sufficiently cowed, they entered the town with much parade. The guillotine was erected in the Place de Justice. Here stood the house occupied by Tallien, who used to watch the executions from his window, and evince a fiendish satisfaction at what he saw.

Such was the state of affairs when Madame de Fontenay arrived in the place. She had no wish to remain any longer than was necessary. It was required, however, that travellers about to cross the frontier should produce a passport duly signed by one of the deputies, also a certificate of *non-émigration*, and a *carte de sûreté*. It is probable that she had neglected to provide herself with these different papers, for, when about to leave, she was arrested as *suspecte*, and thrown into prison, with a fair prospect of only leaving it for the scaffold. She was not personally acquainted with Tallien, though she knew him well enough by name. She now wrote to him to protest against her imprisonment, describing herself as the worthiest of citizenesses, and beseeching him to grant her a hearing. It is not unlikely that the man she addressed had often heard of the beautiful Madame de Fontenay. His curiosity was certainly aroused. He went to the prison wherein she was detained, and had an interview with her. Madame de Fontenay was skilled in all the arts of seduction. Many years afterwards she wrote, alluding to this period of her life, "Quand on traverse la tempête, on ne choisit pas toujours sa planche de salut." She doubtless beheld in the formidable young proconsul a *planche de salut*, to which she must cling, or else drown. On his presenting himself before her, she knelt at his feet, with tears and entreaties; but against such weapons experience had made him proof. It was only when she laid siege to his vanity that he began to relent. Finally, she captivated him completely. He left the prison

desperately in love, and, a few hours later, the prisoner was granted her freedom. Accordingly, though it is said very reluctantly, her project of going to Madrid was abandoned, and very soon she was living openly with him as his mistress.

Life was a drama in which Theresia de Fontenay had always aspired to play a leading part: in fact, she is known to have said that her ambition was to be mistress of a king, like Madame de Pompadour, with ample power to control public affairs. Her ambition may be said to have been more than half realised now. Tallien ruled Bordeaux, and she ruled Tallien. She drove through the streets with him in an open carriage, preceded and followed by outriders. She appeared with him at the theatre, attired as the Goddess of Liberty: on her head was the *bonnet rouge;* one hand held a pike, the other rested on the shoulder of the lion she had subdued. For this extravagant behaviour some allowance may be made, when one considers the peculiar position in which she was placed. It is universally admitted that her disposition was humane, and that she made a generous use of her influence with her "red-gloomy Dis," as Carlyle calls him. Detesting violence and bloodshed, she refused to occupy his house in sight of the guillotine, and insisted on his removing to another. She induced him to relax the severity of his rule, and all the persecuted inhabitants who sought her, she saw. To some she granted an asylum beneath her roof; for others she obtained passports to enable them to flee the country. Daily she begged off numbers of people actually condemned to death. Among those thus befriended, she had, ere long, earned the title of *Notre Dame de Bon Secours.*

Tallien and Ysabeau were rivals, and between rivals much love is never lost. They were assisted in the government of Bordeaux by a monster named Lacombe, who held the post of Public Accuser, and by a *Comité de Surveillance*, consisting of a dozen ruffians prepared to carry out any crime. All these men, from Lacombe downwards, hated Tallien. As long as he preserved a system of terror, they worked with him readily. When, however (thanks to Madame de Fontenay), he went over to the side of clemency, they were much incensed. Their wrath was principally directed against his mistress. She was the cause of this change of front in Tallien —a change which would surely end in their losing all further chance of plunder. They put their heads together, to decide how they might most effectually crush her ; and there occurred to them the bright idea of making her and Tallien quarrel. In this they did not perfectly succeed, though their scheme (as will be shown) was not without effect.

Just at this time (February 1794) there was a lady at Bordeaux (Madame de Lâge), whose life was in imminent peril. She belonged to the condemned order of "aristocrats," and had held a post in the household of the murdered Princesse de Lamballe. Her name had been down for some time on the list of emigrants, her property in France being seized in consequence, and she herself declared *hors la loi*. She had, it is true, quitted the country some three years previously; but the dangerous illness of her mother, who was living at Bordeaux, induced her to return. Her mother having now recovered, she would have departed if she could. But that was impossible. The police were aware of her presence, and a busy search for her commenced. She was obliged to assume various disguises, and to change her quarters continually. Her last hiding-place was with a worthy couple named Contanceau, who kept her concealed in their house for several weeks. Madame Contanceau, by a lucky chance, became acquainted with Madame de Fontenay's maid, and begged her to obtain from her mistress a passport signed by Tallien, enabling Madame de Lâge to leave Bordeaux by one of the merchant-ships sailing thence from time to time. Madame de Fontenay, with her usual kindness, promised to obtain the passport, and expressed a wish to see the person she was assisting. Accordingly, Madame de Lâge, disguised as a market-woman, crept forth from her retreat, and was conducted to the other's house.

Madame de Fontenay, though it was eleven o'clock in the day, was still in bed. She received her timid visitor most graciously, and addressed her as familiarly as though they were old friends.

"Vous me voyez malade," she began: "the fact is, something occurred yesterday which upset me. I will tell you what it was. You are aware, or perhaps indeed you are not, that I used to be on very intimate terms with Saint-Fargeau, who latterly has been spreading all kinds of malicious reports about me. For all that, I am still fond of him. Well, I had my portrait taken here expressly for Tallien; and when it was finished, it struck me as so good that I determined to send it to Saint-Fargeau. Now, you know how the members of the *Comité de Surveillance* detest me. They managed to get hold of my parcel, and examine its contents before sending it on; and when Saint-Fargeau's reply—which, I must tell you, was *assez claire*—arrived, they intercepted it, and took it to Tallien. The consequence was that he came here yesterday, about mid-day, in such a fury that he began spitting blood. He threatened to have me guillotined on the spot. In short, nothing that I can say can give you any idea of his violence. I listened to him with perfect calmness, allowed his anger time to cool, and then exerted all the wit I possess to prove to him that his *Comité de Surveillance* was bereft of common sense. I assured him that the letter had no such meaning as he attached to it; and finally I prevailed on him to give it me, and forget all about it. All this that I am telling you

happened between mid-day and one o'clock, and at six o'clock the members of the Committee had, at my instance, been placed under arrest. I am resolved that they shall pay dearly, and for long, the spiteful trick they have played me."*

Madame de Fontenay spoke in a different tone a few days later. The authorities in Paris had for some time been dissatisfied with the increasing mildness of Tallien's rule at Bordeaux. On hearing of the wholesale arrest of the *Comité de Surveillance*, they decided on recalling him. He was summoned to the bar of the Convention to explain his conduct. On the day that he set out for Paris, Madame de Lâge paid a final visit to Madame de Fontenay, whom, this time, she found in tears, and expressing regret that her hasty retaliation on the Committee should have got her protector into trouble. She was not a little alarmed, too, on her own account. The Committee had been freed from arrest on Tallien's departure, and she was now exposed to their ill-will. Altogether, her position was not agreeable. Nevertheless, she quickly recovered her spirits, and conversed with her guest on a variety of topics. Among other observations, she made the following:

"You women with exaggerated sentiments, and high principles, have, I know, a very bad opinion of me; but I maintain, and am ready to prove, that I have done far more good than any of you. For several months now, I have not lain down at night without having saved somebody's life; while the rest of you, with your royalism, and your romantic notions—be kind enough to tell me of what use you all are!"

She went on to remark that she felt but faint attachment for Tallien personally; but that since she was, in a great measure, the cause of his present difficulties, she considered herself as bound in honour to stick by him. She therefore intended rejoining him as soon as possible. From this resolution Madame de Lâge strove to dissuade her, pointing out how fatal any further connection with him might prove; but all in vain. A day or two later, she herself (under a feigned name, and armed with a passport bearing Tallien's signature) succeeded in escaping from Bordeaux in a vessel bound for New York.

On reaching the capital, Tallien beheld a changed scene. During his absence, the power of Robespierre had increased amazingly. Danton, Desmoulins, Hérault—the chiefs, in fact, of the party to which he himself belonged—had been guillotined: it was manifest that all who obstructed the tyrant's path would be dealt with as they had been. He managed to clear himself of the charge of *modérantisme* brought against him; but still, he

* 'Souvenirs d'émigration,' by the Marquise de Lâge de Volude.

perceived that the green eyes of Robespierre were bent on him with dislike. Such prejudice he proceeded to disarm by being submissive, and biding his time.

Madame de Fontenay, informed by Tallien of Robespierre's hostile attitude, remained for a while at Bordeaux, in doubt as to what to do. She knew that to attempt to quit France, circumstanced as she was, would be hazardous; she likewise knew that going to Paris would be walking straight into the lion's jaws. Yet anything was better than staying where she was. She cherished a hope, too, that Tallien might play a distinguished part in coming events, and possibly attain supreme power. To Paris, therefore, she went back, and settled somewhere in the suburbs. She found things going well with her lover, who had regained public confidence, and was filling the post of secretary to the Convention, of which body he was soon after named President. As it seemed to her a fit moment for bringing herself into favourable notice with the Government, she drew up and presented to the Convention an address embodying her ideas on women, and their duties in a regenerated society. Her standard is a lofty one—far loftier indeed than she had herself chosen to adopt. She gives it as her opinion that the noblest task her sex can undertake is nursing the sick, and administering to the wants of the unfortunate. She calls therefore upon the *Citoyens Représentants* to decree that all young women, before marrying, should "pass some time in the abodes of poverty and grief, and practise there all the virtues which society has a right to expect from them."

She continues in the following strain:

"You will surely allow women to hope that they may bear their part in public instruction, for they naturally suppose that, in the special care you propose devoting to the education of children, their influence will not be overlooked. But above all, they feel confident that you will entrust to them the guidance of those little ones whom misfortune has deprived of maternal care. Let not the charge of having undervalued modesty, and its virtuous effects, be brought against such men as you: for how can modesty be taught except by a woman's voice, how enforced except by her example?"*

Her address was approved by the Convention, and forwarded with honourable mention to the committees of Instruction and Public Safety.

The growing influence of Robespierre at last began to excite the jealousy of his colleagues, and of the Convention generally. He perceived that an adverse current was setting in against him,

*'Notre Dame de Thermidor,' by Arsène Houssaye.

and he prepared to stem it. His suspicions were more than ever directed against Tallien, whose movements he caused to be watched by spies. The intelligence thus gained convinced him that mischief was on foot. He was well aware of Tallien's relations with Madame de Fontenay, and he felt that by caging one bird, he might be inflicting a stunning blow on the other. The power he wielded in the Committee of Public Safety enabled him to imprison whom he pleased. He ordered the instant arrest of Madame de Fontenay, who was seized at Versailles, where she happened to be staying, and conducted to La Force. Even had other pretext been wanting, the fact of her bearing an aristocratic name would have justified this measure in the eyes of the Committee; but besides this, her merciful doings at Bordeaux were thrown into the scale against her.

Tallien, deeply incensed, appealed to the Committee, declaring that the citizeness Fontenay was his wife, that he could answer for her, and that, considering the proofs he had given of devotion to the Revolution, she ought to be restored to him. His appeal was rejected; but it is said (on authority rather doubtful) that Robespierre offered the prisoner her liberty, if she would state her belief that Tallien was an "unworthy citizen"—her reply being that she would "sooner suffer a thousand deaths."

Though inwardly tormented by the keenest anxiety on Theresia's account, Tallien assumed an air of unconcern. He hired a lodging near La Force, and, by securing the good-will of the turnkeys, managed to correspond with her. This seems to have been discovered, for she was suddenly removed to another prison, the Carmes, and more rigorously watched. Among her prison-companions here were Joséphine de Beauharnais (afterwards Empress), Madame d'Aiguillon, and an Englishwoman, Mrs. Dalrymple Elliott, whose connection with the Duke of Orleans (Egalité) had subjected her to persecution.*

Reports of the momentous events passing outside reached Madame de Fontenay at the Carmes. She heard of the theatrical ceremony in honour of a supreme being, at which Robespierre had arrogated to himself all the importance. She heard too of that which more nearly concerned herself and her fellow-captives—the reconstruction of the Revolutionary Tribunal. After this had been decreed, the Terror set in with an intensity before unknown. On the flimsiest pretences, or no pretence at all, the

*Mrs. Dalrymple Elliott has left an interesting account of her experiences at this time; but unfortunately her narrative breaks off with tantalising abruptness some time before her meeting with Madame de Fontenay.

"suspected" were flung into prison, summoned thence before the Tribunal, and dismissed untried to the guillotine. According to Thiers, twelve hundred and eighty-five people were condemned to death in the six weeks that followed on the passing of Robespierre's murderous law. During this period, the life of the prisoners was a prolonged agony. To resign themselves to their fate, and await their turn, was all they could do. Madame de Fontenay, however, was not given to despondency. Life was precious to her, and she was not going to lose it without an effort. She still found means of communicating with Tallien, and she now wrote to him, adjuring him to compass Robespierre's destruction, by whatever means—even by assassination.

Tallien, indeed, did not need the entreaties of her he loved to goad him to action. He, and several others in the Convention, were trembling for their own heads. Even in the club of the Jacobins, where a grim harmony had till now existed, there was a serious split. Collot, Billaud and Barère, knowing that Robespierre intended prescribing them, had joined the combination forming against him. It was evident that a desperate struggle for the mastery was at hand.

Meantime, even the high-spirited Theresia had begun to lose hope. One morning a turnkey entered the room she occupied, and proceeded to carry off a mattress on which she lay at night. On asking why this was done, she was told that a newly-arrived prisoner wanted it, and that she would probably have no more need of it. This was significant enough; but further proof that her last hour was approaching came presently, as the following stinging lines, addressed by her to Tallien, show:

"I have just learnt that to-morrow I am to appear at the Tribunal—that is to say, that I am to mount the scaffold. This is hardly a fulfilment of a dream I had last night. My dream was that Robespierre was no more, and that the doors of all the prisons were opened; but, thanks to your signal cowardice, there will soon be nobody left in France capable of realising it." *

Having shot this arrow, she submitted with calmness to having her long black silky hair cut short at the neck, in preparation for the descent of the fatal blade. Her companions, Mesdames de Beauharnais and d'Aiguillon, and Mrs. Elliott, did the same. They then, all of them, derived what comfort they could from Tallien's reply, which ran thus: "Be as prudent as I shall be brave, and put aside your fears."

It was the evening of the 26th July, or 8th Thermidor, according

* 'Biographie Universelle.'

to the Revolutionary Calendar. Robespierre had on that day reappeared at the Convention after a protracted absence, and delivered a speech in which he dwelt on his own virtues and public services, and complained of the misrepresentation his incorruptible conduct had undergone. He threw out dark hints about the existence of a "criminal coalition" in the very heart of the Convention, and pointed to the exposure of traitors, and the silencing of faction's voice, as the only means of saving the country. He abstained from naming anybody in particular, though called on to do so by many among his hearers; that duty he left to his colleague Saint-Just, who was to read a report, explaining everything, next day. His harangue was listened to from first to last almost in silence—a silence that boded ill for him.

Surprised and offended, he hastened, as soon as the sitting was over, to the club of the Jacobins, and poured out his griefs to his friends there.

During the night, few members of the Convention can have slept. Mountain and Plain had combined to resist the tyrant's advance. Tallien, feverishly impatient, undertook to lead the attack, and asked but that his adherents should back him up manfully. In the morning, deputies crowded to the Convention earlier than usual. Tallien was standing at one of the doors of the hall, and conferring with some of his supporters, when he saw Saint-Just pass in, report in hand, and ascend the tribune. Robespierre and Couthon followed.

"Now is our time!" exclaimed Tallien. "Let us go in." And in they went, just as the speaker was beginning to read his report, which was no less than a vehement denunciation of forty deputies, of whose presence Robespierre was resolved to be rid. Saint-Just had hardly uttered three pompous introductory sentences, when the fiery Tallien interrupted him on a point of order, and shouted out, "*Je demande que le voile soit entièrement déchiré!*" These words were greeted by a tempest of applause from all corners of the hall. As it subsided, Billaud-Varennes began an indignant philippic against Robespierre, who, on its conclusion, dashed forward to obtain possession of the tribune. But Tallien would not allow this. Springing up the steps, he continued the attack in spirited sort.

"A moment since," cried he, "I demanded that the curtain should be torn aside; and that it has been so, is now evident. The conspirators are unmasked. Though well aware that my life was threatened, I have till to-day kept silence. But last evening I was present at a meeting of the Jacobins, and I beheld the new Cromwell assembling his forces. Trem-

bling for my country, I armed myself with a dagger; and I am prepared to plunge it in the miscreant's heart, if the Convention has not the courage to decree his impeachment."*

As he spoke, he drew a real dagger from his bosom, and brandished it before the eyes of the assembly. The temper of the house was shown by the deafening cheers which saluted this action—cheers which were repeated at intervals as Tallien poured forth a long-pent-up torrent of invective.

Robespierre turned livid. He again strove to ascend the tribune, but it was already occupied by a fresh enemy. He ran backwards and forwards demanding a hearing; but the President's bell, and cries of *à bas le tyran*, drowned his voice.

"*Président des assassins!*" he screamed; "for the last time, I call on you to allow me to be heard." He looked despairingly around the hall, and met nothing but menacing gestures, or averted glances, while the tumult went on increasing. At length, foaming at the mouth and out of breath, he sank on his seat, conscious perhaps that all was lost.

The question of impeachment was put to the vote, and passed unanimously. Before the house rose, Robespierre, and his foremost adherents, had been arrested and led off to prison. The following day, they were dragged through the streets of Paris to the guillotine.

The news of Robespierre's defeat and execution quickly reached the prisons, where hundreds of wretched people were awaiting that death which had now overtaken him. Of course, Madame de Fontenay was among the first to be set at liberty. It soon became known that the close of the Reign of Terror was in a manner attributable to her, and the released prisoners, and their friends, named her, in gratitude, *Notre Dame de Thermidor*.

Tallien had, during their residence at Bordeaux, often pressed Madame de Fontenay to marry him; but she had refused, on the ground that her father would not consent. He had now saved her life a second time, and she could not well remain obdurate any longer. They went through the form of a civil marriage towards the end of the year.

To the Terror there succeeded an inevitable reaction. While the tyranny of Robespierre lasted, society had lain, as it were, oppressed by a nightmare. Female influence seemed extinct; the voice of youth was stifled; a people before gay and frivolous had caught something of the gloomy enthusiasm of its rulers. But now that the restraint imposed by fear was removed, poor Human

* Thiers' 'Histoire de la Révolution,' vol. vi. p. 449.

Nature asserted herself. Nothing but a surfeit of those pleasures from which they had been long cut off, would satisfy the young men and women who followed the lead of the brilliant Madame Tallien. She indeed was the ruling spirit of the scene. She had rivals, it is true. Madame Récamier, the banker's wife, was prettier; Madame de Staël far cleverer; Joséphine de Beauharnais more winning; but the sceptre of authority was hers. Her house became the rallying-point of the Thermidorians.

"Her desire was," says Thiers, "that her husband should play the part of peacemaker, of repairer of the evils of the Revolution. She drew around her all those who had contributed with him to the events of the 9th Thermidor, and tried to win them by flattering them, by assuring them that they had a right to hope for the public gratitude, for oblivion of the past—which many of them needed—and, above all, for that power which was now promised to the adversaries, rather than to the partisans, of Terror."*

Thorough-going Revolutionists refused to be won over by Madame Tallien's seductions. Such of them as were persuaded to be present at her concerts and assemblies, accused her of seeking to inaugurate an era of luxury and self-indulgence. This charge was quite justifiable. In the matter of morals, a period of unbounded licence had set in. The example set by Madame Tallien herself was by no means in accordance with the fine sentiments contained in her address to the Convention. It was certainly just as well that the orphans of the Republic, in whose instruction she had claimed a share, were not obliged to derive their notions of modesty from her.

Extravagant costumes were adopted by both sexes. Women attired themselves after a pseudo-classical fashion. Their hair was cut short, and bound by a fillet; their necks and arms were bare; their short-waisted gowns fell in clinging folds, that showed very plainly the shape of the limbs they covered. On their feet were sandals instead of shoes. Madame Tallien, it is well known, wore jewelled rings on her toes in as glittering profusion as on her fingers. As for the young men who shone in her train—the *Jeunesse Dorée*, as Fréron taught the Republicans to call them—nothing could well have been more ludicrous than their foppishness. The coats they wore had enormous collars, devised as though in scorn of the guillotine, and tails which, beginning somewhere between the shoulder-blades, descended almost to the heels. Their chins—nay, the very points of their noses—were buried in voluminous cravats of white lawn. Except a couple of tresses a foot long, dangling

* 'Histoire de la Révolution,' vol vii. p. 120.

by either cheek, their hair was combed to the back of the head, and fell in a tightly-plaited tail. They spoke lispingly, and without rolling the letter *r*. They carried huge eye-glasses, and stout clubs loaded with lead. Notwithstanding their tails and cravats, they were courageous when their blood was up; and in many a pitched battle with the Jacobins, they broke skulls in abundance with their clubs, besides getting grievously mauled themselves.

There was a perfect rage for dancing among these *merveilleux* and *merveilleuses*. To entertainments called *bals des victimes*, none but those who had lost a relation by the guillotine were admitted; and they, wearing a band of crape around the left arm, hopped and whirled to the memory of the dead!

Madame Tallien's exertions in favour of moderation—political, that is—were, on the whole, successful. The complete control she exercised over Tallien enabled her to perform as many acts of benevolence now, as previously at Bordeaux. She had numbers of unhappy beings, still lingering in prison, released. For others, who had been ruined by the Revolution, she obtained restitution, in part, of their property. She had a hand also in most of the reactionary measures passed, such as the suppression of the Revolutionary Tribunal, the closing of the Jacobin Club, and the condemnation of the monsters Fouquier-Tinville, Carrier, and Lebon. In the street in which she lived, the Rue Saint-Georges, there were still to be seen such ferocious inscriptions as "*L'égalité, la fraternité, la République, ou la mort!*" She sallied out one fine day, escorted by some of her "gilded youth," and had them all removed. At a dinner which she gave to commemorate the 9th Thermidor, the guests consisted mainly of members of the Convention of widely different opinions. As the evening advanced, words ran so high on politics that the hostess, to use her own phrase, "feared it would end by their flinging the plates at each others' heads." To calm the storm, she rose and proposed the following toast—"*à l'oubli des erreurs, au pardon des injures, à la réconciliation de tous les Français!*" These words had the desired effect on those present, and in return, the health of *Notre Dame de Thermidor* was drunk with enthusiasm.

Madame Tallien had made up her mind that her husband was to play a distinguished *rôle* in public affairs; but in this she was disappointed. Tallien's day, politically speaking, was nearly over. At the beginning of the turmoil now subsiding, he had struggled, as had other upstarts, to the surface. The assistance he lent in overthrowing Robespierre gained him power and prominence for a period. But the time had now come for

him to sink again. During the trials of Carrier and Lebon, attention was naturally drawn to the atrocities by which his own proconsulship at Bordeaux had at first been marked. Afterwards, while sitting in the Council of Five Hundred, under the Directory, he was railed at by Royalists for his share in the massacres of September 1792. His subsequent conduct in the affair at Quiberon exposed him to fresh censure. Newspapers, both Royalist and Republican, attacked him, the former as a regicide, the latter as a traitor to the true cause.

In the cloud of merited discredit which overtook him, Madame Tallien found herself involved. There was much in her own past life for which she had reason to feel shame; but in the crimes committed by him she had no share. Society frowned on her, partly on account of the laxity of her moral conduct; but just as much because she bore the hateful name of Tallien. Her title of *Notre Dame de Thermidor*, of which she was not a little proud, was taken from her, and she heard herself styled *Notre Dame de Septembre*—a cruel and unjust thrust which wounded her deeply. Of the affronts offered her, we find an instance in a letter from Mr. Henry Swinburne, who was in Paris in November 1796. He went, one evening, to a ball given by Madame de Valence. Presently, Madame Tallien was announced. Upon this, all the other ladies hastily took their departure.

"Can you imagine such folly in their circumstances and misfortunes?" exclaims he. "I will venture to say that there was scarcely one but had directly or indirectly asked, or will soon ask, a favour of that woman, whose greatest crimes perhaps are her beauty and her riches."*

He saw her again, soon afterwards, at a subscription-ball at the Hôtel de Richelieu, when her presence did not cause such a flutter. She wore, it seems, "a wig *en tête de mouton* sticking up behind, interwoven with pearls and diamonds." Her dress was a combination of gold and poppy-colour. "She looks sometimes dejected," writes Mr. Swinburne. "The women of character, though belonging to the Republic, do not associate with her." At last this state of things became unendurable. Madame Tallien had always despised her husband, whose character was really as mean as his origin. He could be of no further use to her now: indeed, her social disgrace she attributed solely to her connection with him. She therefore spurned him from her presence. It wanted but this to complete his extinction.

In 1798, when Napoleon was about to set out for the conquest of Egypt, Tallien was permitted to make one of a number of

* Swinburne's 'Courts of Europe.'

savants accompanying the expedition. In Egypt he remained three years. Whether he was really competent to study the pyramids, or elucidate inscriptions, it is impossible to say. He probably found a more congenial occupation in editing a journal—the *Décade Égyptienne*. Some disagreement with General Menou, who was appointed Commander-in-Chief in succession to Kléber, led to his dismissal, towards the close of 1801. The vessel in which he sailed for France, was taken by an English privateer in mid-ocean, and brought to England. He came to London, where, to the disgrace of the Whig party, the Whigs made much of him, and invited him to routs and banquets. His return to Paris was nothing short of a shock to Madame Tallien. The year after their marriage (1795) she had presented him with a daughter; but during his absence in Egypt, she had given birth to three other children, of paternity unacknowledged. To the returned *savant* she would have nothing to say; and to prove herself in earnest, she applied for, and obtained, a divorce from him, possibly on the ground of the incompatibility of their tempers. This done, she treated him with distant civility. To the sort of terms they were on in 1802, we find a reference in the 'Life' of Lord Campbell, who writes from Paris in September of that year:

"Our visit to Tallien was a very curious one. We talked very coolly with him concerning the massacres of September; but nothing astonished me so much as the conversation that took place about his wife. You know she divorced him, and has since lived with a variety of other men. Yet he talked of her beauty, of her wit, of her amiable manners, of having been calling upon her, and of doing her the pleasure to introduce me to her acquaintance."

Even this semblance of friendship ceased after a time, and the humiliated Tallien retired into utter obscurity.*

Later in the same year, Charles James Fox visited Paris, and Madame Tallien (or Madame Cabarrus, as she preferred calling herself, since divorcing Tallien) gave a grand dinner in his honour, the expatriated Irish rebel, Arthur O'Connor, being one of the guests. French horns played during dinner; afterwards a clever ventriloquist entertained the company by his "imitation of a Revolutionary Committee in the corner of the room." Fox's

* The principal remaining events of his life are well known. Fouché in 1809 obtained for him the consulship at Alicante. On his way thither he was seen by the Duchesse d'Abrantès, who describes him as a person of lowering aspect, and atrabilious complexion. He had not been long at his new post when he caught the yellow fever, and in the course of a dangerous illness lost the sight of an eye. The restoration of the Bourbons deprived him of his place, and in 1814 he was once more in Paris. Here he sank into extreme poverty, subsisting mostly on charity till his death in 1820.

secretary, Mr. Trotter, from whom we learn these particulars, writes of the hostess: "She is a most lovely woman, something upon a large scale, and of the most fascinating manners." He adds, "she is rather in disgrace at Court, where decorum and morals are beginning to be severely attended to." It is plain that Mr. Trotter was of opinion that the Court had made a mistake in renouncing so bright an ornament as *la Cabarrus*, on any consideration.

In 1805, the Comte de Caraman, who for many months had been hovering around Theresia, like a moth around a lamp, made her an offer of marriage. The knowledge that she had divorced two husbands (both of them living) did not alarm him. She indeed, it is to be supposed, thought it high time to turn over a new leaf, and be respectable, for she accepted him, and they were married without delay. Soon after, by the death of his father, M. de Caraman succeeded to the title of Prince de Chimay, and the possession of extensive landed property in Belgium. On settling down at her new home—a splendid ancestral château—the one desire of the Princesse de Chimay was that, as far as she was concerned, the past should be buried for ever. But this was not so easy to effect. The past refused to be buried. She was reminded, with distressing frequency, of her existence since the outbreak of the Revolution. Her husband, by right of birth, held a high post at the Court of the Netherlands; but she was not received there, nor would the Queen hear of her being presented. So was it at Paris, where she and the Prince went every winter. The doors of the Tuileries were closed against her; and when her old friend, the Empress Joséphine, saw her, she turned her head the other way—by order of Napoleon.

Of course a woman, such as she was, could muster a court of her own, wherever she might be. At the Château de Chimay, she reigned supreme. There guests succeeded guests. She found most pleasure in literary and artistic society. The author Chateaubriand, the singer Malibran, the composers Cherubini and Auber, were among those who enjoyed her hospitality. Cherubini, finding his invention flagging, had abandoned music, and taken to the study of botany. He was however persuaded by the Princess to resume his pen; and before quitting her roof, he had produced one of the best of his compositions, a mass for Saint Cecilia's Day.

In 1829, when time had transformed her into the sedatest of matrons, Madame de Chimay heard that a book, professing to contain the memoirs of her life, was about to be published in

Paris. As the contents were expected to be of a scandalous and altogether piquant sort, the folks interested in such publications were anxiously awaiting its appearance. Her son, Edouard Cabarrus, who had entered the medical profession, and resided at Paris, exerted himself to have the forthcoming volume suppressed, a service which his mother wrote to acknowledge.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart," said she, "for trying to prevent the publication of the *Mémoires* with which I am menaced. When people are so cowardly and mean as to speculate on scandal, and to attack a woman, a mother of a family, no honourable feeling, no scruples, can be expected to influence them. Their victim must only be resigned. I fear it will be no easy matter, my friend, to induce such creatures to forego what they call a speculation. I despise people who seek a living by slandering others; and I pity those who find amusement in works which cause misery, and often estrangement, in families before united. As for the revelations with which I am now threatened, nobody will suppose that, esteemed and beloved as I am in this country, where I occupy an honourable position, I am going to disturb the peace of my home by noticing them. I owe it to M. de Chimay to submit to calumny without complaining, and whatever attacks may be made on me, they will receive from myself, and all right-minded people, the contempt they deserve."*

It would seem that the dreaded volume never saw the light after all, some arrangement having been made with author and publisher for its suppression.

During the closing years of her life, the Princesse de Chimay was a constant invalid. She tried system after system, waters after waters, but without finding health. Her home existence was peaceful and retired. She devoted much time and attention, it is said, to the serious education of her children by M. de Chimay. At the time of her death in 1835, her name was almost forgotten in French society. Yet, before long, it was again dragged into the full light of day. Her three children, born during the years 1800, 1801, and 1802, while Tallien was absent in Egypt, were described in their *actes de naissance* as the offspring of Mademoiselle Cabarrus, unmarried. This stamped them as bastards. They took no steps in the matter, while their mother lived; but, on her death, they applied to the Tribunal de la Seine, to have the said *actes de naissance* rectified, and themselves acknowledged as legitimate Talliens. Their appeal was at once opposed by the sons of the Prince de Chimay, on the ground, seemingly, that the applicants might, if their legitimacy were established, lay claim to a share in certain property left by the Princess. At the close of the trial, which lasted several days, judgment was given in favour of the applicants, seeing that they

* 'Notre Dame de Thermidor,' by Arsène Houssaye.

came into the world after the marriage, but before the divorce, of the Tallien couple. At the same time, the *Procureur du Roi*, who presided, rebuked the Chimay princes for conspiring to *flétrir la mémoire de leur mère.*

It was doubtless the wish of Madame de Chimay to wipe out all recollection of her having ever borne the name of Tallien. Nevertheless, it is as Madame Tallien that she will always be remembered. In extenuation of her moral backslidings, little, if anything, can be said. It is a pleasanter task to acknowledge that she performed numberless acts of generosity, at the risk often of her own life, and that she was instrumental in saving France from the thraldom of Robespierre.

An Unpublished Poem of Adam Lindsay Gordon, "the Australian Poet."

[Among the mass of letters I have received since the appearance of the article on "An Australian Poet," testifying to the strange fascination of Gordon's muse, came a communication from a lady who had been a fellow-passenger of his in the ship *Julia*, which sailed for Adelaide on the 7th of August, 1853. This lady remarks:—"I urged him to write in my Manuscript Book. He was shy of doing so, saying he had never tried his hand at verse-making. However, he wrote the enclosed verses—his first essay—in which you will recognise his style." What caused my correspondent to detect a poet in the exiled youth, so moodily leaving "home," I cannot say; it is only another illustration of the superiority of woman in the insight born of sympathy. This slight poem has all that strange blending of outward cynicism and inward emotion which distinguishes Gordon's reflective verse, and is very similar in tone to the more powerful poem addressed to his sister on his leaving England, to be found in the Appendix to the collected edition of his works, and which, it appears, was written before he set sail, so that his "hand" was not quite "untried" at verse-making. But though this unpretentious little poem cannot lay claim to the distinction of being the first effort of the poet's genius, many persons at least in Australia will be grateful to its preserver, to whom I return my best thanks for the permission to publish it. A. P. M.]

"AN EXILE'S FAREWELL."

I.

The ocean heaves around us still
With long and measured swell,
The autumn gales our canvas fill,
Our ship rides smooth and well.
The broad Atlantic's bed of foam
Still breaks against our prow;
I shed no tears at quitting home,
Nor will I shed them now!

II.

Against the bulwarks on the poop
I lean, and watch the sun
Behind the red horizon stoop—
His race is nearly run.

Those waves will never quench his light,
O'er which they seem to close,
To-morrow he will rise as bright
As he this morning rose.

III.

How brightly gleams the orb of day
Across the trackless sea!
How lightly dance the waves that play
Like dolphins in our lee!
The restless waters seem to say,
In smothered tones to me,
How many thousand miles away
My native land must be!

IV.

Speak Ocean! is my Home the same
Now all is new to me?—
The tropic sky's resplendent flame,
The vast expanse of sea?
Does all around her, yet unchanged,
The well-known aspect wear?
Oh! can the leagues that I have ranged
Have made no difference there?

V.

How vivid Recollection's hand
Recals the scene once more!
I see the same tall poplars stand
Beside the garden door;
I see the bird-cage hanging still;
And where my sister set
The flow'rs in the window-sill—
Can they be living yet?

VI.

Let woman's nature cherish grief,
I rarely heave a sigh,
Before emotion takes relief
In listless apathy.
While from my pipe the vapours curl
Towards the evening sky,
And 'neath my feet the billows whirl
In dull monotony!

VII.

The sky still wears the crimson streak
  Of Sol's departing ray,
Some briny drops are on my cheek,
  'Tis but the salt sea spray!
Then let our barque the ocean roam,
  Our keel the billows plough,
I shed no tears at quitting home,
  Nor will I shed them now!

L. G.

Ship "JULIA," *September* 1853.

A Silesian Love Story.

By the Author of 'The Garden of Eden.'

Not far from Breslau lies a wild plain. Wild, because the broken rocky soil throws up fir-trees, bushes, and myriads of wild flowers that cling lovingly to and clamber caressingly among the stones—as faint tender things do cleave to the rough and hard,—while mere patches of vegetation stud the land. Still, each few miles,—clusters of huts, a church and a few big houses, testify to a population. Nothing daunted, villages exist in this sterile Silesian plain, which terminates in the dense pine forest that glooms darkly at the foot of the Giant mountains. One village boasts of a large castle, whose white towers—rising from among shrubberies of cultivated trees—are a feature in the landscape. Within the massive walls there are vast halls, rich in carving, and full of old armour and trophies of ancient weapons. There are gorgeous apartments linked as the jewels of a necklace. One wing of the castle is occupied by the Countess. The vista, when you stand at one end and look through the open doorways, is like a series of brilliant frames containing a rich green picture, whose centre is a white figure.

This is the Countess, a tall, stately lady of some fifty years. She was once—in the palmy days of Weimar when Goethe ruled society—one of the court beauties of this little German Athens. Her delicate face is of a creamy pallor in the pale-coloured, semi-darkness of her green velvet-hung boudoir, though in open daylight networks of fine wrinkles would show upon it like a web-like mask. Her still golden masses of wavy hair are carefully arranged, drawn back from her high forehead. She moves her blue eyes slowly, her lips unclose carefully; for the Countess is fighting a daily duel with Time, and has acquired many a little knack of parrying his thrusts. She has so far succeeded, that as she reclines in her muslin draperies in an armchair—her profile cameo-like against the velvet, her white arms carelessly poised—she is undoubtedly a handsome woman.

The room is all green. Sycamore boughs wave outside the window, stands of evergreens are in the corners. A green carpet half covers the polished floor, the dark wood tables and cabinets are furnished with malachite. In this light the fresh face of a young girl loses its rosy brightness—a tall, well-made girl, with long plaits of dark brown hair falling upon the blue and white dress which seems somehow to match the blue eyes that look out of her clear skin. She is standing

before the Countess, her hands crossed. On one of her fingers is a plain gold ring.

This is Lise, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer—a distant connection of the noble family—who after his wife's death, when Lise was a child, came to take charge of the estate, sending his little daughter to be brought up by a married sister in Dresden. By degrees Herr Barmann came to be "everybody" with the Count and Countess. Under his management, their sterile acres cost them half of their former expenditure, and their Intendant, or bailiff, even held out hopes that some day the estate would be self-supporting, which few estates in that part of Silesia could be said to be.

At first Lise used to stay with her father during the summer; and she and the young Count Alexis, the only son, (who was a few months her junior,) were great playmates. But when they were both fourteen, some little incident that occurred, caused the Countess serious thought. From that time, it so happened that Alexis and Lise never came home simultaneously. When Count Alexis, who was now a lieutenant in the Prussian army, happened to get leave—which was not too often, for he was frequently in trouble with his Colonel—Lise, if staying with her father, would be suddenly summoned by her aunt on some pretext. Just now, the Countess remembered with satisfaction that Alexis' last furlough was only a month ago. It was better so, even though Lise was now engaged to a serious-minded, most satisfactory young solicitor in Dresden. A betrothal in Germany endows a young girl with almost a wife-like sanctity; still, she would prefer that these young people should not meet. She blamed herself for having sanctioned so familiar a friendship between members of different strata of society, and she would leave nothing undone to prevent its renewal.

Just now, she was talking to Lise of her betrothed, Franz Ulrich, whose square sensible face was pictured in the photograph Lise had brought to show the Countess, which the lady held in her hand, glancing at it as she concluded a long speech containing much moral advice with, "—and I hope the engagement will not be too long, for——"

She stopped abruptly, rose to her feet, and turned fiery red. Quick footsteps with the sound of clanking sword and spurs were followed by the entrance of a tall young officer. There was a cry of "Mother" in a manly voice, and a helmet and gloves clattered to Lise's feet as the Countess was boisterously embraced by the last human being she expected to see at that moment—her son.

"How,—why, what is this, Alexis?" There was more annoyance than surprise in her tone, and she glanced at Lise with a look that meant, "Go—as quickly as you please." But Lise stood, amazed,

with parted lips, wide-open eyes, and heaving breast. Taken aback by the strangeness of the tall figure—that one word "Mother" by its familiar tone took her back years in her life; she felt a little forlorn child again, weeping more bitterly for her lost playmate, Alexis, whom she had called "brother" and addressed with the tender "thou," than she had wept even when standing at her mother's open grave casting flowers upon the coffin.

The tall young soldier with the bright boyish face and fair close-shaven head, turned,—gave a short staid bow as he saw that a young lady was present,—then exclaimed, sprang forward, and clasping both her hands, cried, "Lise! Is it possible? Can it be you?"

He would in his ardent forgetfulness have kissed the sister-friend of childhood on both cheeks, but in spite of her confusion Lise's ready tact made her retreat, with a ceremonious obeisance.

"To-morrow, my child," and the Countess nodded significantly.

Lise vanished, but Alexis sprang after her. "Lise, don't go so soon. I have so much to say to you."

Lise paused halfway down the great staircase, her eyes cast down, her hand resting on the broad balustrade. She murmured something about "another time," and, as the Countess's voice called "Alexis" in a peremptory tone, started and ran out of the house.

"Why, Mother, you never told me how beautiful Lise had grown," said the young soldier, as he unbuckled his sword. His mother compressed her lips, and stooping, picked up the photograph and handed it to him. He looked puzzled. "What has this ugly fellow to do with me?"

"He is to be Lise's husband."

"Lise—married? Why, she is a child. What are you all about?"

The Countess, leaning back in her chair and taking observations as she proceeded, detailed Lise's engagement. "But this is waste of time," she continued, "talking over the affairs of the Intendant's daughter, when we have so much to say to each other. How was it you got leave?"

While Alexis replied, somewhat sulkily, his mother was thinking how to get Lise away. Lise had only been home a few days. What subterfuge was available to send her back to Dresden? Ah! a sudden idea flashed across her.

"I am glad it happened that you came to-day," she began. "Had you arrived a day later, you would not have found us. To-morrow we start for Warmbrunn. I am anxious about your father's health, and shall persuade him to take the baths."

To her discomfiture in walked the Count himself, a fine old man, with piercing dark eyes and white hair, who received his son with

a courtly satisfaction, which would have been cold but for the customary embrace.

"I am sorry you are not well," said Alexis, bending from his altitude to kiss his father's hand.

The old man stared. "I never felt better. Who said I was ill?" he said irascibly, turning to his wife.

The Countess was equal to the occasion. She held the reins, and though husband and son might kick and rear she never loosed her hold, but waited patiently, till rebellion subsided, to gain her point. She gave a lengthy, roundabout explanation of her opinion of his "waning health" to the Count, and then, without pausing, smilingly suggested to Alexis that he required rest before rejoining them at dinner. Puzzled, annoyed at his mother's mysterious behaviour, the punctilious obedience of manner to his parents demanded of a young German nobleman led Alexis to take the hint, and to leave his father and mother alone.

As soon as the door closed, the Countess's manner changed. She always carried her will with her husband—who was opinionated and somewhat obstinate—by storm. So she burst into a tirade—how cruel, how annoying it was, that after keeping Alexis and that girl apart all these years, they should have met like this. She had always had a presentiment some mischief would come of that companionship. If it were not that Barmann was simply indispensable to them, she would get rid of him at once—then there would be no fear.

"Of what?" said the Count crossly. The Countess's tirades always ended in his having to adopt some measure he particularly disliked. Now this sudden journey to Warmbrunn was gradually unfolded to him. He sat back in a chair, his hands in the pockets of his white linen coat, paling with annoyance in the green light of the boudoir. But when he adjourned to his dressing-room, he had admitted that perhaps it might avert unpleasant complications were they to carry off Alexis from the possible fascination of the siren of his childhood. "Although I consider it is a ridiculous fuss about nothing," he said. "When you were younger, Thekla, you were not so timid."

But the Countess bore even this faint taunt in so good a cause.

However, the adjournment to the baths of Warmbrunn was not to be! The unpleasant excitement produced an "attack of heart," to which the Countess was subject, and in the middle of dinner she fainted, and had to be carried to her room, which the rustic doctor, who was hastily fetched from a neighbouring townlet, declared she would not be able to leave for some days.

So Alexis was free to roam, unspied upon by maternal eyes. As a rule, he had found it dull at the Schloss, except when there were

hunting and shooting parties, or when he brought home brother-officers, and there were extra balls and picturesque garden-parties besides the ordinary weekly receptions. In this part of Silesia there was a Schloss, or "great house" to each little village. Except the pastors, and a few poorer members of noble families, there were few people who could be "received." The farmers, doctors, and petty lawyers ranked as did Herr Barmann—as nondescripts outside the pale of society. The Frau von N—— or the Gräfinn von M—— would have been speechless with horror had it been suggested to them that Lise Barmann could join their weekly meetings, held alternately at each other's mansions, when the young people walked about the grounds, the young men smoking, the girls drinking coffee and eating little fruit cakes served on tiny plates; later on, dancing on the polished floor of the castle ballroom, while their elders passed the time before the lengthy hot supper, chatting, knitting, and card-playing in adjoining saloons. But since the child Lise's eyes had looked so tearfully and wistfully into his when they parted years ago, Alexis had seen no young lady in his exclusive circle to compare with her. He was thinking of her, as he strolled out next morning, after sitting a few minutes by the bed where his mother was lying, weak, white, and anxious.

Standing on the white, shingle-covered drive, gazing at the walls that towered above him—their massive turrets flushed in the morning sunshine that was reddened by the faint mist that precedes a hot day—he felt strangely content. His eyes wandered over the groups of shrubs that, parting, showed pictures of unmowed grassy lawns with flower-beds and gravelled walks. The shadows at his feet were pale; the flag hung limply on its pole above the castle tower. It would be a fit day to lounge in the shade at Lise's feet, as he last did five long years ago, before he went to the military school. He had never known such hours of content since then. He had tasted the frivolous dissipations of garrison life; had been flattered and petted by women, amused and introduced to worldly life by men; but he thought the power to be happy had gone with boyhood. By his sensations now he knew this was not the case. Happiness would return with Lise. He paused, mentally contemplating the idea, even as a boy might pause after climbing a tree to take a last look at a long-coveted apple that had hitherto evaded him before plucking it from the stem.

Then he walked through the open gates, left the castle behind him, and walked up the broad road leading to the village. First under the trees, then in the open, then under the high brick wall of Herr Barmann's garden. He rang a bell, and the green gate opened as if by itself. He stepped down into the square garden. There was the

patch of turf, there were the bushy flowering plants, the high walls thick with climbing fruit-trees; there, to his left, was the old yew-tree forming an arbour, there was the rustic seat where Lise and he used to sit, reading the same book; to his right was the low stone house with a trellised verandah, where Lise's birds were hopping about and chirping in their wooden cages. He had not been here since Lise went to live in Dresden, and he was met on his return home by the news that Lise had just gone,—or that she was prevented coming,—and in his disappointment he had shunned the empty house.

"Good-morning." A thin, sharp-eyed man of middle age, in a "Schlafrock" or dressing-gown, a cap on his grey hair, and a long pipe between his lips, came down the steps from the house door. "It is long since you have been here, Count Alexis. You want Lise. The *gnädige Frau* sent the Jungfer Marie" (her maid) "to ask for Lise to go and sit with her."

How was it then that Alexis had not met her? Oh! that was easily explained. Lise went to the castle through the fields by the path that led from their garden gate to the shrubberies. "I always go that way," added the Intendant, with a sharp, scrutinising glance aside at the young man. "But now you are here, come in and tell me some news of Breslau." But Alexis refused. The suspicion he had felt that "they were trying to prevent his seeing Lise" was strengthening. In his annoyance at being treated like a boy, he determined to keep his own counsel, and to see as much of Lise as he pleased.

In the last field between the shrubberies around the Schloss and Herr Barmann's house was a piece of water, bordered by a narrow copse. Here there was a boathouse, where he and Lise used to play at being shipwrecked mariners on a desert island, going to and fro to the tiny islet in the middle of the lake in the curious three-cornered punt with the swan's head. Lise must pass here, and here Alexis went and waited for her.

After the first shock of surprise yesterday, the girl had been seized with a strange joy—a feeling of rest and sweet satisfaction rather than a pleasurable excitement; it was as if some treasure she had been seeking and longing to find for years past, had suddenly come to light, or as if an answer, full and satisfying, had ended a weary questioning. At first she only felt; when she began to think, sensations of dread, or shy fear, arose. She blushed and started guiltily at sounds. An anxious glance came from her serene eyes when her father spoke. She hesitated when the Countess's message came, and herself proposed to go to the castle by way of the fields. She thought Alexis would seek her, and instinctively wished to avoid him, and Herr Barmann read her thoughts, with sharp misgivings.

While he was seriously pondering whether to send Lise back to Dresden out of harm's way, at once—Lise was coming home through the shrubberies, accompanied by the old white St. Bernard, Chance, who used to make the third young playfellow in those dear old days. Then he was a fluffy young pup with big awkward paws and a silly inquisitive face, now he was a sage old dog, whose long hair flapped as he marched sedately along, his dim eyes impervious to attractions that to his worn sensibilities were attractions no longer. Young with Alexis and Lise, his life had bounded on while their lives had crawled, and now that theirs were unfolding into the first passionate freshness of full noon, his was melting into the shades of fast coming night. Yet even old Chance could be roused from his steady torpor. As Lise and he neared the open field of the lake, he suddenly paused, sniffed, and with a short bark rushed away from his mistress. Lise heard a voice say, "Chance, dear old Chance," then back he came, leaping and fawning upon—Alexis!

She shrank back, her heart seemed to stop—then her life seemed smothered by an embrace. Alexis kissed her on both cheeks, as he had kissed his mother yesterday. Anger, ruffled dignity, restored her equilibrium. "How dare you," she said, retreating and brushing her cheeks with her handkerchief.

"Then you are not my sister, my darling Lise? Because you are grown up and betrothed, you are going to cast me off? You forget your promise to love your adopted brother Alexis best in the world as long as you lived! Oh, Lise, you cannot mean it! Do not try to be silly, like the fashionable young ladies in town!"

His words were like a stream of sunshine. Lise forgot doubts, conventionalities, and looked up into the honest blue eyes with their fringe of black lashes, that she knew so well. "We are no longer children," she said.

"Are only children to love and to be happy? Oh, Lise, be yourself, my sister, my star; all these years that they have kept us apart, home has not been home, it has been like a bad dream. You know those dreams—every one has them—where you have lost home and friends, and cannot find them; my life has been a long dream like those since we said good-bye, Lise. There was no one whom my heart could speak to, so it got numb and stopped speaking till yesterday. Then, when I saw you again, it suddenly sprang up and seemed to warm me and bring me to consciousness again, and to-day it burns with joy as if it could fly from me and flutter to your feet, so dearly do I love my dear, long-lost sister."

Their hands clasped. They felt children again, basking in the warmth of an innocent sympathy in which ceremony and false shame died a sudden death. This sweet, blushing, serene woman was to

Alexis the child Lise, glorified; and Lise saw in the tall young man the little brother,—the thin, weakly lad whose aching head had so often been pillowed on her shoulder—"her boy," as she used to call him in a quaint, motherly way—grown tall and strong.

Drawing her hand through his arm, Alexis led her along the path towards the boathouse. "Now that we are together again, at last," he said joyously, "we must go over the old ground; you will come to all the places where we were so happy, once more, before we part for ever, won't you, Lise?"

"Part for ever!" The words were as a cold hand laid upon Lise's heart, yet she knew them true. Her life would weary itself out with dark, staid Franz Ulrich in the refined, museum-like Dresden, while Alexis—would fight, or enjoy a glittering peace, in the heart of a brilliant army.

"Don't let us talk of parting, just for to-day."

Emotion had scattered the cautious edifice of "young-ladyism" careful hands had built upon the warm, country-bred nature. Lise was her old self. She did not care whether it was "comme il faut" or not to visit their old haunts. Her whole being had rallied around a primitive instinct, her love for Alexis.

"They are trying to keep us apart, though, Lise," said he, bending his tall head as they passed under a tree. "These old people can't enjoy anything, so they grudge enjoyment to us. The fire of life has burnt them to cinders, instead of consoling them, therefore they think it an evil. I have thought life a weariness, a bore, but so long as you and the memories of our happy days were in the world, I could not believe it a curse!"

They stood in the boathouse. The wavelets lapped the keel of the punt. Lise peered into the corners. "Our chairs and our tables are gone," she said. "Last time I came here they were all black and rotten, so I suppose they have been given to the poor for fuel."

"How I can remember you sitting there in the corner!" said Alexis. "You were knitting and pretending to be the Hausfrau, with your little round serious face, and the golden curls peeping from under your funny little cap."

"While you went out shooting with a toy gun, and brought home a sour apple or two," laughed Lise. "What a day in our lives it was when we had a real picnic on the little island! Do you remember, Alexis? It was my birthday, and my dear mother packed us a little basket, we took it over in the boat, and made a fire, and had Abendessen all by ourselves, under the willow, with Chance."

"We will go there, and to the forest, and everywhere!" cried Alexis. "Lise, I am determined we will be happy by ourselves these next few days. If we are to lead the dull, hard lives other people

lead for the rest of our lives, we will have something to look back upon to comfort us. When I think back," he said, hushing his tones, "I believe we shall be like children again, in Heaven, Lise. We were happy, but we never did any harm to any one. To be together was all we asked . . . Oh, Lise! it is a shame that we should be separated. Why?"

This impetuous cry reached other ears. As Lise shrank into the shadow, recalled to the recollection that she was Fräulein Barmann of Dresden, the promised wife of Franz Ulrich, a figure came along the path leading to the boathouse. It was the Count. Seeing them, he stopped short, then gave Lise a satirical little bow, and without glancing at his son, passed on.

They looked at each other in dismay.

"Who cares," said Alexis, so defiantly that Lise smiled. After all, what a boy he was! But her heart sank as he told her about the planned expedition to Warmbrunn. She had been somewhat puzzled by the Countess's colder manner that morning, and by her choice of books for Lise to read aloud, which had been of a moral and warning character. Now she understood; the knowledge brought the blood to her cheek, reserve to her manner. She left Alexis abruptly. She would promise nothing in answer to his entreaties, not even that she would meet him again, and he went back to the castle dejected, and secretly hardening himself against all but Lise herself, whom he regarded as an innocent victim to the machinations of her elders.

Meanwhile the Count had gone straight to his wife, greatly irritated by what he had seen and heard, confessing that she was right. "The question is, what is to be done?" he said, pacing the room, dark and wrathful.

"Leave that to me," said the Countess, in her weakened voice. Though her body was enfeebled, her mind was clear and determined. Presently she rang her bell, and sent her bright little maid Marie on a secret errand to Herr Barmann.

Then she rose, dressed, and staggered into the antechamber—called the Red Chamber, from its crimson hangings and decorations,—and awaiting the Intendant, thought out her plans. Herr Barmann was about the premises, so she had not to wait long. He entered, quiet and self-contained as usual, and expressed his regret at the sudden illness of the Gnädige Frau.

"Yes, my good Barmann, I am not strong. It is for this reason I have sent for you. Be seated, and let us speak low, for it is of my most private affairs I would speak."

Herr Barmann took the proferred chair. What was coming? The Countess to unbend like this!

"You are aware, my dear Barmann, that the Count would never

have sunk his capital on the estate as he has done, had it not been that he wished to keep up the property that our son might inherit and perpetuate the family name." (The Intendant bowed his head.) "Until now, he has grudged no expenditure, as you know. But, I grieve to say, Alexis has angered his father . . . we are anxious about him . . ."

"Indeed?" Herr Barmann gazed consciously at the polished floor. What was coming of this preamble?

"Yes," continued the Countess, shaking her head. "The boy is headstrong. His father will make no allowances. I dread an open rupture. Were Alexis to offend his father—were he, for instance, to suggest a marriage which we should not approve—the Count is just in the humour to sell the property, and to will everything to his sister's children. I have no power with my husband, when he is once stirred into action, Barmann; and this is why I have sent for you. I have been urging the Count to make his will. His excuse is, there is no notary at hand. Your future son-in-law is, I believe, a lawyer. Lise is here. What more natural than that he should wish to pay you a visit? If you could privately suggest the matter to Herr, Herr—Ulrich, and invite him openly, we should make his acquaintance, and I might lead the Count to make a will in Alexis' favour. Do you understand?" she concluded meaningly.

"I believe I do," said her factotum, somewhat drily. He understood that she was afraid of Lise, and was strategising for the presence of Franz Ulrich to annul the embryo flirtation. He knew it was a wise idea. The two were deeply attached to each other, and harm might come of it, for Lise was no fitting wife for Alexis. Yet the Countess's dread annoyed him, and he went home frowning as blackly as the Count himself.

In the evening he wrote to Ulrich, but he did not tell Lise. He was silent at supper-time, until she filled his pipe and brought it to him; then he seized her fair little hand, and said, very gently—he had always spoken gently to his daughter since her mother died:

"Lise, you would oblige me by not going out to-morrow—at least, by keeping in the garden. And do not receive any one, my child. Believe me, I have a good reason, a serious reason, for asking you this."

The blood rushed to Lise's face. Innocent though she was, she felt guilty.

"But I had promised to go to the Frau Pastorin's coffee the day after to-morrow," she faltered. "I promised Lennchen to teach her a new embroidery stitch . . ."

"You may go where you please the day after to-morrow. I spoke only of to-morrow."

"What could it mean?" thought Lise; but as she asked herself she fancied she knew. The Countess did not think her good enough for the companionship of her son! First came a rush of angry pride, then a burst of tears. She was leaning out of window that the evening air might cool her burning eyes, when the scent of a cigar mingled with the perfume of the jasmine on the verandah floated upward; she heard a footstep on the path outside the garden wall. Some one went along whistling a Prussian quick march. It was Alexis. The thought comforted her. Her adopted brother did not despise her; she was good enough for *him*. He would find a way of seeing her, too, in spite of them! and with incipient rebellion in her heart she fell asleep that night.

"Remember your promise, Lise," said her father, as he went out next morning, adding to himself, "To-morrow, Ulrich will be here, and she will have plenty to occupy her."

Alexis, who guessed that his father's moody air—which the Countess tried to atone for by additional sweetness—was the result of "some nonsense his mother had put into his father's head about Lise," pretended to lounge about the house and to have no desire to be out and about. But as soon as he felt himself unwatched, he stole off.

Lise's heart beat as the bell rang. She dropped her work and crouched upon the sofa as she heard the old servant repeat the sentence her master had taught her before leaving the house:

"The Fräulein had a headache, and could see no one."

"Very well." Lise heard the words distinctly. They sounded careless or angry. She interrogated old Kätchen, without any satisfactory result. What would Alexis think of her? Franz, her staid, black-bearded betrothed, was forgotten in her annoyance and anxiety. Why should they have forced her to be rude to Alexis, against her wish and will? It was tyranny. . . . When her father came in, she had so far controlled herself as to maintain that outward unruffled serenity which was her principal charm. But she could not steady her voice, and her blue eyes shone and scintillated.

"She loves that boy—better than Franz!" was her father's dismayed conclusion. "What a mischance that they should have met!" and he shook his head, and thought sadly of Lise's motherless condition. "If anything happens, what can *I* say or do?" he asked himself. "Truly the good God is severe upon the she-lambs when He takes away the ewe."

The next morning Lise was herself. Her brief imprisonment was over. She went singing about the house, and after the midday meal was over, dressed herself carefully in a fresh white dress trimmed with ribbons whose colour matched her blue eyes, and, taking her work-bag, went to the Pastor's.

At the end of the village, the simple little church, with the tall, sharp spire, stood in the graveyard. Close by was the Pastor's house, a white cottage, half hidden by foliage. As Lise approached, some little girls who were playing in the garden ran to the low fence and welcomed her, clapping their hands.

"Here's Lischen!" they cried, and their mother, a thin, little woman with kind eyes, dressed as simply as any peasant in a coloured cotton gown, came out of the house, not pausing for a moment in her busy knitting.

"That is right," she said, and mother, children, and Lise went and sat on the benches under the slender, waving trees at the end of the garden.

After yesterday's mental turmoil, it soothed the girl to be in that quiet spot, where the simple goodness of the Pastor seemed to have created an atmosphere where no unholy influence could penetrate. Sitting there on the bench, the flickering shadows playing quietly upon the turf at her feet, the quiet, round-eyed children gravely watching her as she showed them the new stitch, the clattering of cups in the house, and the cooing of the Pastor's doves the only sounds—Lise felt ashamed, softened, inclined to justify the elders for separating her from Alexis.

"Perhaps it is as well," she thought; then she blushed . . . she had recognised in that instant that they loved each other—that she was false to Franz!

"Why are you so red, Lise?" asked little Elisabeth quaintly. "Mother" (here the Pastor's wife came towards them with a coffee-pot, followed by a maid-servant with a tray), "why is Lise so red?"

"The sun, I suppose," said the Frau Pastorin. Till the coffee was poured out, and the cake handed round, she had no leisure to think of such trivialities. Then, it did occur to her that Lise was quieter than usual, and she asked after Herr Ulrich.

Lise turned pale. "I have not heard from him for some days," was her reply.

"There is nothing wrong, I hope, my child?"

The Frau Pastorin was so interested and half-dismayed that she actually stopped knitting.

Lise shook her head. "Not with *him*," she said significantly.

"With you, then, Lise?"

Lise glanced upwards. This discovery of her own feelings, coming suddenly, as a shock, had unhinged her. She felt almost delirious. Should she tell her kind friend, or not? What was there really to tell? She spoke, and hardly knew what she said, but her last words were an appeal for advice. She found herself begging the Frau Pastorin to tell her whether a girl would be justified in breaking an

engagement should she find out she could not love the man to whom she was betrothed, as a woman should love her husband.

The Frau Pastorin was aghast. In her experience, girls were generally only too glad to be betrothed to a good, kind man.

"I am sorry to hear this," she began, and then to her relief, she heard the click of the garden-gate, and her husband walked in. "You had better ask the Pastor," she said, and hurried away into the house to get his coffee.

"Ah, Lise!" said the Pastor, coming towards them. He was a small, spare man, prematurely grey, with a patient, hopeful face. "It is hot," he said, as he took off his hat, and sank into a garden chair.

Before this good man—who had such a hard struggle to provide for a family and his much-loved poor and sick out of a mere pittance—youthful troubles retreated, abashed. Again Lise felt ashamed, and talked of anything, everything except herself.

But the Frau Pastorin felt the confidence a responsibility; and presently, when the Pastor settled to smoke after drinking his coffee, she sent the children away and told her husband Lise had something to ask him. But Lise could not speak, so the good woman, with delicate tact, proposed the question Lise had asked. The Pastor smoked in silence, and Lise bent low over her work. Then he said:

"You ask me whether a woman's whim should be allowed to break a good man's heart? A curious question, Lise."

She looked up, startled.

"I am not using extravagant expressions. A betrothal is a solemn contract. A man does not ask a woman to be his wife unless he feels that he loves her as his wife; and no true German girl places her hand in his and vows herself to him without a reciprocal feeling. With others, volatile and frivolous, who do not recognise the sanctity of marriage, I have nothing to do. They should apply to citizens of the world for advice."

"You are severe, Herr Pastor," said Lise. She could hardly speak, and presently she pleaded home work, said good-bye, and left them. But she could not go home, then. She felt suffocated; she turned out of the high road, and took the path to the fields—to the barren plain that was spread out at the foot of the mountains, below their belt of black pine-forest.

Little Elisabeth ran to the garden fence, and peeped wistfully after her young godmother, Lise Barmann, watching the white figure growing smaller and smaller as the girl walked quickly across the fields, till it quivered against the dark forest shades like a nodding daisy, and disappeared. Then the child started back.

"Hulloa, little one," said a man's voice, and a tall figure seemed

to tower above her like a giant. "Fräulein Lise is here, is she not?"

"No, Count Alexis," quavered the shy, childish voice. "Lise went away in a hurry, and she is in the forest."

"Thank you, little one."

And before little Elisabeth had recovered her fright and confusion, Alexis seemed growing smaller and smaller as he strode rapidly after Lise.

"He does go quick," thought the Pastor's daughter, bobbing her white-capped little head over the fence, and watching the tall military figure till it too disappeared. Then she had a fresh surprise. She saw a grave young man with a black beard coming along the road. He walked briskly, using a thick walking-stick; a knapsack was strapped to his shoulders, his black clothes were grey with dust. He stopped opposite Elisabeth, and fixing his serious black eyes upon her, lifted his cap, and asked her "which was Herr Barmann's house?"

The child stared, fascinated. Her thoughts travelling those mysterious and misunderstood mental paths of childhood, she said, "Do you want Lise, too, like Count Alexis?"

A strange expression crossed the man's face. He adjusted a strap that pressed his shoulder too tightly, then he said with a sad smile, "Then you know Fräulein Lise?"

She is my godmother."

"She is here?"

"No; there—there," and Elisabeth pointed gravely to the forest. The dark young man hesitated, looked round, shifted his knapsack. then absently raising his cap, took the same road as the others. Little Elisabeth watched him, sucking her finger, and wondering.

The Pastor's words had been as powerful words often are to the mentally lethargic—they had suddenly and sharply awakened Lise from a moral stupor. As she walked towards the forest, clasping and wringing her fingers, she was in despair. Her truthful, tranquil nature was brought face to face with her position. She honoured and respected the man who had loved and chosen her, the man she had accepted as her husband in innocent ignorance of the fact that the old brother-and-sister tie between herself and the boy-count had been a real, actual, tie; now, she knew, she felt, that the childish tenderness and mutual dependence was the mere sign of a fact—a deep, unutterable, and passionate love . . .

"What am I to do?" How many times have young hearts, in the bitterness of ignorance and helplessness, asked that question of themselves? "What am I to do?" asked poor Lise—as each step reminded her of Alexis, as the sight of each familiar tree and rock

gave her a sharp pang . . . "I am a traitor to Franz, and I cannot help it . . . if the merciful God would only let me die!"

She was in the forest. Tall, bare trunks seemed marshalled upon the mossy ground. The tufted heads of the pines rustled in the breeze with a faint, mournful sound. The waning sunlight glanced regretfully across their dark trunks. Here, in the forest, there was an awful, significant silence, that scared the very birds, whose haunts were the bright breaks of green glade that broke the sombre monotony of the assorted rows of trees. Along the narrow path lay a felled pine, and here Lise seated herself and wept . . .

Until she was roused to self-possession by the sound of a footstep. She dried her eyes, and rallied herself . . .

The tall, slender figure of Alexis came through the shades. She saw him before he saw her. He was whistling softly to himself, and his face shone with a look of exultation till he looked to Lise like a young god . . .

As he came near, she shrank back; but he saw her white dress, and with one spring, was close to her, seated at her side . . .

"Now, Fräulein Parmann, what does this mean?" His happy blue eyes sparkled under his long lashes. "You see it is of no use to avoid me—I know where you are."

His bantering, his actual, loved presence, was too much for poor Lise. She turned aside her head, to hide the big tears that welled from her eyes . . .

Alexis was in dismay. He saw that Lise trembled. He waited a minute, then he heard a sob. He threw himself on his knees at her feet, in anguish.

"What have I done? what have I said?" he cried—"oh Lise, for pity's sake tell me. I would rather die than hurt you . . ."

Quick as thought, she had struggled with effervescent emotion, and the face she turned towards him was serene. "You have not hurt me," she said with a faint smile—"except by coming to me when I thought I should be alone."

"Then you cry when you are alone, Lise?"

"I did not cry before you came." Lise was rallying her forces to defend herself—but they were scattered—and she blundered . . .

"People who cry are not happy, Lise."

"I am quite happy." That rebellious lip of hers would quiver, and her hands would tremble, though her eyes were fixed upon Alexis with a steady gaze.

"You are not my darling sister?" The tender, manly voice was a torture, for she would have liked to fall into his arms, and cry till her trouble was over . . . but the trouble could not be over, and what right had she to his intimate sympathy? With a violent effort

she brought herself to say, in an unnatural voice, "Count Alexis—I am not well—I am troubled—please go, please leave me . . ."

"If you are in trouble, my darling Lise, who but I should help you?"

"He was by her side, sitting on the felled trunk, his supporting arm round her . . . "My sister, whom I have always loved best in the world, will you not let me help you?"

"You cannot." Lise rallied herself, slid from his embrace, and roused her drooping energies to help her to be true to herself to Franz, and to Alexis . . .

The movement, her repudiation of his sympathy, touched him to the quick . . . He felt the gulf that lay between them, he dreaded that she was lost to him, for what could Lise, the wife of another man, be to him but a comparative stranger? "If I thought it would make you happier," he cried passionately, "I would leave you here, now, this moment, Lise! But I know you better than you do yourself, I know that no one can ever be to you what I have been . . ."

"You must not say that," she said, alarmed . . . alarmed more at the echo of his speech in her own heart than at the words themselves . . . "I can assure you . . . " she would have said, "I am happy, and I love Franz Ulrich," but it died upon her lips. Her eyelids drooped, and Alexis gained courage.

"Tell me all about this engagement," he said, with the tender authority of an elder brother. "I have heard but the mere fact. Perhaps, when you have described this Herr Ulrich to me and have told me the circumstances—how the betrothal came about—I may believe that he will make you a better husband than—any one else could . . . "

"I met him in Dresden," began Lise, after a pause, then she sighed . . .

"Well, I did not imagine that you met him here. They seem to have imprisoned you in Dresden, pretty well." He spoke bitterly.

"It was—at church."

"Quite romantic, in fact—like Gretchen, in Faust." (She looked reproachfully at him.) "You must not mind me, Lise. It makes me so angry to see you unhappy that I cannot help saying sharp things."

"We sat just opposite . . . I did not notice him, but my aunt used to laugh about his looking at me . . . One day I dropped my hymn-book, and he picked it up . . . then some months afterwards we went to a party, and he was introduced to me . . . he did not say much, and did not ask me to dance—but he stayed in the corner . . . " She paused.

"Hints for courtship. It is more efficacious to stay in the corner

than to dance with the young lady you admire. Don't look miserable, Lise . . . go on—I won't interrupt you again, I promise I won't."

"Then—then—soon after that, his father came to my uncle, and said that—Franz wished to be betrothed to me." She blushed, and sighed . . .

"So when he did come out of his corner, it was to some purpose! Well, I can continue your story for you. There was the betrothal, and the cards were sent out" (you took good care not to send one to me, by the way), "and this ring" (he took her hand, then flung it from him) "was put on your finger by him . . . Bah! I could tear it off and throw it into the stream—the badge of your being bound to that ugly, black-bearded, solemn idiot . . . oh yes! Lise—you needn't start—I know his face."

"How?" Her blue eyes were round with astonishment.

"How?—Now do you know how?" he cried furiously, tearing a photograph from his pocket . . . "Ah! you look guilty, don't you? You never missed it . . . you never thought of looking at the portrait of your beloved since you left it in my mother's room. And you call that love? I am ashamed of you, Lise! And as for the man who can inspire such a poor, sham sentiment, that is what he deserves!" and he tore the portrait across and across, and flung the fragments contemptuously from him . . .

Her breast heaved . . . it was true she had not noticed the loss of the photograph. "The fact is, I am not worthy of him!" she cried. "He is so clever, and oh! so good. From the first moment he spoke to me I felt how far above me he was; how different to the people I usually met. I trusted him with my whole soul. Ah! I could go to him now and tell him all—everything, sure and safe that he would forgive me and help . . ."

In her agitation she had betrayed herself. Alexis suddenly changed—paled. "All?" he said with assumed calm. "What is there, Lise, that he would have to forgive?"

She glanced round, startled, like a hunted creature. "Nothing, nothing. I don't know what I am saying. Oh! let me go," and she sprang up, and would have fled.

He stood in her path, and waved her back. "Not yet," he said. "I have something to say to you, Lise. Sit down. Leave your hands in mine. Now look into my eyes and listen. You and I are before God, Lise, together—apart from the world—and here, if only for once, we should be true. Let us put aside subterfuge and pretence, and speak heart to heart as we always did when we were innocent children. Your happiness is my dearest wish, and your happiness is at stake. Lise, I have only two things to ask you:

the first is that you will look straight into my eyes, and tell me what you read there."

She struggled faintly. "You are hard—too hard upon me, Alexis."

Then she knew. . . . "Look at me, Lise," he said determinedly. She raised her eyes to his, and stayed, as if fascinated. Fate had met her on the very threshold of her life, stern, unrelenting—and she had succumbed. Alexis knew she was in his hands, at his mercy. Her eyes filled with tears, the corners of her mouth drooped piteously.

"Do not make me say it," she sobbed; then her head fell upon his breast, her arms stole round his neck, where they were held by his, strong in triumph.

As the two, conqueror and conquered, sat still, the emotional waves of love, fear, regret, and relief, beating upon their young souls, steadied by unity—a man who had been leaning motionless against the trunk of a tree in the background, staggered away into the shades as one drunk or demented, following the footpath as if by instinct till he came to an open glade, where the lengthening sunbeams quivered on the green moss, where a quiet pool mirrored the sky, and fair lilies lay peacefully on its surface as kind thoughts on a pure, God-loving soul.

A white face was lifted to the calm, blue sky; an agonised soul faced eternity as its last resource. All souls must be left alone in eternity at last. From some the waves of passionate life retreat slowly one by one; others face reality first in death; others are lifted rudely and abruptly out of the ocean of life upon the rock where they await eternity alone with heaven. Among these was the man whose drawn features bore the stamp of utter loss, the grand, sad patience of the martyr—Franz Ulrich.

Presently the agony passed, and a look of infantine peace gleamed upon his face like soft moonlight. Self, that had been dying a sharp, quick death, was gone. Henceforth his life was relative, secondary, belonging to others.

"Ulrich is very remiss. At least, he might have written," thought Herr Barmann, disappointed when he returned home to find no sign of his expected guest. "He cannot come now; had he travelled by the last train he would have been here an hour ago." Then he soothed his vexation by his usual resource—his pipe. He was pondering Lise's affairs in his mind as he smoked, leaning back in his chair on the grass plat, when the door-bell sounded, and Ulrich appeared.

After Herr Barmann's joyous welcome was over, he said to his future son-in-law, "I cannot congratulate you on your looks. But

perhaps you are anxious about Lise? She is only spending the afternoon at the Pastor's. I will send for her."

"Pray do not," was on Ulrich's lips—arrested by a peal of the bell. He well knew who it was. "Prepare Lise to meet me," he said abruptly to her father, and disappeared into the house. The white dress fluttered in the sunlight, and in a moment Lise's arms were round her father's neck, her warm kisses were on his cheek. She was exalted in the first ecstasy of happy love. Alexis had her promise that she would tell Ulrich the truth, and would strive with him against the natural obstacles that must occur before the child brother and sister could be grown-up man and wife; and she was happy with a bright happiness she had not known for years.

"My little dove has enjoyed her afternoon at the Pastor's," said Herr Barmann, his face broadening with satisfaction. "And she little knows the happiness in store for her. I might tease you, Lischen, but God forbid! I will not keep you in suspense. Ulrich is here!"

It was well that it was dark. As he said those three pregnant words, Lise seemed to shrink and collapse. She stood an instant as if paralysed, then some one came out, a voice that was Franz's sounded cheerily, her hand was clasped in the kind, close grasp she knew so well.

"We must tell Lise why I am here. We owe her an explanation." Franz had seated himself on a garden chair, and was striking a match to light his cigar. Lise's fingers clenched upon the back of her father's chair, to save herself from falling. She was giddy with emotion. Then Franz, in his usual straight, stern fashion, told Lise the circumstances of his visit. He was there, by invitation, to draw up the Count's will; after which, Herr Barmann expatiated upon the family affairs of the noble family, and related how the whole hopes of both the Count and Countess were centred in their only son.

"The money they have spent to make the estate a splendid inheritance!" he admiringly exclaimed. "It is true parental devotion!"

"Which, it is to be hoped, the young man will repay in the future," said Franz drily.

"The Count is far too shrewd to leave the door open for possible thieves," was Herr Barmann's remark. "From what I heard from the Gnädige Frau, all will be arranged that should Count Alexis take any serious step against their wish, he will be a beggar. This is only right. Alexis is young and impetuous. He has a good heart, but with his expectations, is naturally flattered, and is a target for unscrupulous people. If he knows that the first filial disobedience will be followed by disinheritance, he will think twice before he acts."

"True," assented Franz. Then he started up. A white figure glided out of sight and disappeared. "Lise has gone," he remarked.

"Only to see about supper, my friend," said the Intendant.

But although a neatly-arrayed supper waited them in the "Speise-stube," or little dining-room of the cottage, Lise did not appear, sending a message by old Kätchen that the sudden surprise had given her a headache.

"Indeed, the Fräulein looks very ill," said the good woman sympathetically, as she removed the covers.

Herr Barmann frowned, but Franz was calm, and his remark, "It was hardly fair to have taken Lise by surprise," restored her father's content.

Meanwhile, poor Lise was going through her first great agony. She was too intrinsically good to deceive herself. She realised the position. She knew that her duty was plain: to give up Alexis, at once, for always, and afterwards to tell Franz what had passed between them, and the true state of her feelings, leaving the issue in his hands.

"I must write to Alexis to-night." Her paper was before her, her pen was dipped in the ink, then between her and the blank page came the recollection of the bright boyish face as she had seen it last, glowing with love and triumph. The pen was dashed down. "I cannot; it is too cruel!" she sobbed. But with the relief of tears came tender thoughts that cooled her passion as if it were fanned by angels' wings; thoughts of her dead mother, whose pain had been lessened, whose death had been consoled, by the Countess. Should she repay her mother's best friend by a cruel injury—for such Lise's marriage would be to the proud lady whose greatest boast it was that her pedigree was without a flaw? Should she rob her beloved brother-friend of his birthright, for this she would most surely do were she to second him in what was most likely a mere boyish folly? "Never! never!" she cried; and before another half an hour had passed, old Kätchen had delivered a note at the Schloss directed to Count Alexis, containing a few words clearly and boldly written:

"Dear Brother and Friend,

I think we were both mad to-day. Forget all that I said; I bitterly repent, and recall every word. And never again recollect your old companion Lise except as the faithful wife of the good, much-to-be-honoured man, Franz Ulrich."

Next morning, the Countess—feeling strong in her belief that Franz Ulrich had arrived, and that, after an interview with him, all would be well—was breakfasting in the verandah with her

husband, when Alexis came clattering along the corridors within, and emerged, in full uniform, his cheeks flushed, his eyes glittering. He greeted them with a military salute.

"Why—what—how—Alexis!" A sudden fear chilled her, she knew not what.

"I am off, father and mother—that is all. I see you have not read your papers."

The papers were lying unopened on the breakfast-table. Alexis took one, unfolded it, and pointed to an ominous sentence in huge, black letters—"Declaration of War."

"I heard from von Mansfeldt. Here is his letter," and he handed a thin sheet to his pale mother, who recoiled at the ominous sight of his thick, military glove. The letter was from his friend, Captain Mansfeldt, written in great excitement. After a long term of peace, "rumours of war" when they occasionally arise, were scarcely credited, especially by a body of soldiers, fresh, young, eager to "practise" their acquirements, wild to spring at the enemy's throat. Thus the declaration of war, though expected in diplomatic circles, had burst upon the army as a gigantic surprise, as indeed something "too good to be true," and the news had kindled a passionate enthusiasm which would presently subside into a still, dogged intensity which boded ill to the enemy. To-day, with Lise's dismissal in his pocket, Alexis shared the general spirit, whatever he might have done had the news arrived yesterday; and he spoke glowingly of what was in store—of the coming campaign.

"But von Mansfeldt speaks of volunteering, of transferring into another regiment, does that not mean that yours will not be called out as yet?" stammered the Countess, with a gleam of hope.

"I shall see when I reach Breslau." Alexis strode away, to expedite the servants, who were hurrying to get their young master's luggage ready. It seemed but a few short, cruel instants before the Count and Countess stood and watched the cloud of dust and the waving helmet as Alexis was whirled away to be hidden by the smoke of the battle-field—perhaps for ever.

The pair could not look at each other. The Count stood grimly watching the clouds of dust clear from the corner round which the carriage disappeared. The Countess silently staggered into the house, pressing her hands to her weak heart; she sat in the silent hall where tiger skins lay spread on the marble floor; the lurid eyes of the stuffed heads seemed to gleam at her, the empty visors of the helmets crowning the armour glowered darkly as if indeed Death's empty sockets confronted her for the first time; then Marie, her maid, came in, pale, with red eyes, and in a subdued voice announced, "Herr Ulrich."

"I cannt see him!" said the unhappy mother passionately. Then, as Marie bowed her head, and would have retired, she said, "Never mind, bring him in."

She bowed coldly to the square, somewhat awkward young man with the serious eyes and the bushy black beard. With a woman's swift changefulness, she merely saw in Franz her son's rival. She forgot her horror of love between Alexis and Lise, and felt angry with Lise that she could tolerate this common, ordinary person after knowing her bright, glorious Alexis!

"I regret to hear this unexpected news, madam."

The Countess drew herself up. It seemed a liberty in this "lawyer fellow" to commence an ordinary conversation as if he were an equal, instead of confining himself to his business. "Is Lise with you?" she asked haughtily.

He replied, "No."

"I think it would have been the least she could do to come to me at once and offer her sympathy," said the Countess. It was a relief to feel angry with some one.

Ulrich, still standing hat in hand, explained that the news of the declaration of war had but just arrived at the cottage as he left, and that he had begged Herr Barmann to break it to Lise. The Countess looked up sharply. Did she not detect a hidden meaning in his words? She would have spoken, then checked herself. Ulrich offered to retire, and to come another time to go through the papers with the Gnädige Frau. But the little fit of anger had braced the gracious lady, and she rose and swept before Franz into the Count's library, where the Count was sitting before his table, staring miserably into the corners, seeing miniature battle-fields as patterns before his eyes, dazzled as they were by the terrible word, war.

"Is this necessary, to-day?" he asked, looking at them with dazed eyes. "Is it necessary that I should be tortured by making provisions that—that may never be required?"

He hardly knew what he was saying. But the Countess heard, and understood, and was as angry with her husband for assuming the possibility that Alexis would be killed, as with herself for her own inward fears; she smiled derisively, and, seating herself, motioned Ulrich to a chair, and began to talk on the subject of Alexis' future as if he were destined to spend his days there, in safety, instead of tempting fate among bullets and cannon-balls.

In an hour or two the Count's will was executed, signed, and witnessed. Alexis was heir to a fine property, provided he married with the consent of his parents. Otherwise, he could not claim one farthing.

Ulrich returned to the cottage deep in thought, indeed every few minutes he paused, and seemed to turn over something in his mind. "She is a determined woman," he thought, alluding to the Countess. "But, if I am not greatly mistaken, it is more bravado than firmness. There is too much show of confidence. She is just the one to break down utterly at a moment's notice. Now for my poor, poor little Lise." His heart ached so much for the one he loved too dearly for her to anger him, that his own trouble—his own cruel struggle with himself—was almost forgotten.

Lise was making preserves in the kitchen. She met him with a forced smile, and talked about the great news with a show of unconcern. But she was deadly pale. And as the calm hours throbbed by, the sun shining, the doves cooing—happy voices of children echoing in the sweet summer air as if there were no such existence as national anger and the savage duels of countries one with another—she grew paler and paler, and at each moment it seemed to her that her life would refuse to go on.

As the days passed and Alexis' regiment was not among those despatched to the seat of war, the Countess breathed more freely. She invited Franz and Lise to supper, showed them her treasures, talked continually of their marriage—with frequent hints as to the probable extent of her own gifts—and was collected and gracious. After all, now that she had been privately reassured by friends in high quarters that Alexis' regiment would be one of the last called upon, and that it was quite possible that before this the war would be over, she persuaded herself that all had happened for the best. Alexis had been called away in the nick of time, before he had made a fool of himself, and it should not be her fault if Lise did not return to Dresden, Ulrich's wife. She had already suggested a wedding at the castle—quiet, of course, because it happened in such serious times—to Franz, and he had replied as he was in the habit of replying to suggestions, that the matter should receive his best consideration.

"I cannot quite make that man out," thought the Countess, afterwards. "Does he love the girl? He does not look in the least like a happy lover. Is he jealous? He does not treat her as if he were. I never saw greater reverence in a man's manner; he might really be of good family, to judge by his behaviour to Lise." She occupied herself with the marriage, and had succeeded in talking over Herr Barmann to mention the subject to Franz.

"Still at Breslau, thank God!" was the Countess's exclamation, when Alexis' letters arrived. About a week after the declaration of war, the postman and Herr Barmann arrived simultaneously as the Count and his wife were at breakfast, and after glancing at the postmark and the beloved handwriting, the fond mother put aside

the letter till she had finished her talk with the Intendant. Then the Count and Barmann began a discussion; and with a tender caressing touch the Countess broke the seal. A moment later, there was a faint cry, a fall—the Gnädige Frau had fainted.

A glance at his son's letter, which had fallen from her hand, and the Count knew why . . . Alexis announced that he was transferred into the Black Dragoons—a regiment that had obtained the sobriquet of the Black Deaths, because they neither gave quarter nor obtained any, a regiment that was supplied and reinforced by volunteers, because through its savage daring and cool desperation it was chosen to lead forlorn hopes and all the most dangerous attacks, therefore after a long campaign it was but the skeleton of a company that was crowned with the laurels whose roots were planted in many graves.

After Barmann had assisted to carry the Countess to her room, Ulrich came to him, and said, "Come to Lise—I fear she is dead." In a few curt lines Alexis had informed Lise that in a day or two he would be at the seat of war, and as it was not at all likely that he should return, he took this last opportunity to wish her joy of her marriage. Lise had not fainted, like the Countess, but she had seemed to fall into a stupor. Ulrich had fetched the Frau Pastorin, and when the two men reached the cottage, the doctor had arrived. He shook his head gravely, and declared it was the effect of a shock upon an enfeebled system. She must have been ill for some time past.

While at the cottage Lise lay white and still on her little bed, the Count and Marie were restoring the fainting mother at the castle. As the Countess rallied and her opening eyes fell upon the sorrow-stricken face of her husband, she realised what had come to pass . . . The truth roused and braced her failing strength, and seizing the Count's arm, she cried—"the Black Deaths! Alexis! Merciful God! Let us go—now, at once, to save him!"

They tried to soothe her. But she pushed them aside, and rang her bell. "My cloak—Marie, do you hear? Am I to be obeyed, or not?" and her voice was shrill with anger. "The carriage—at once, with all haste," was her order to the servant. Then she turned to her husband and said bitterly—"If it had not been for that wretched, miserable girl, Lise—Alexis would never have done this . . ."

"Thekla!" cried the Count. "Take care what you say—at this moment, perhaps, Lise is dead . . ."

The Countess was fastening her cloak . . . her fingers stopped . . . she stared at her husband . . . Lise—dead? In an instant she knew what this would mean. To go to Alexis with such news

would be to fix this resolution of his. She knew her son well. Although she would not acknowledge it even to herself, she believed in the depth and sincerity of this his first love. Lise's death would be the worst thing that could happen to them all. She must be saved . . .

"Come," she said calmly to the Count, tying her cloak, her resolution taken. "Before anything can be done, we must go to Lise."

Ulrich was tenderly bathing Lise's forehead, the good little anxious Pastor's wife fanning her the while, when old Kätchen came to him and whispered that the Countess begged him to go to her, at once. She was in the garden.

She was standing in the flood of sunshine which poured upon the grass plat . . . looking at the peaceful, home-like flower-beds, at the rustic seat under the tree—knowing that till she died this place would live in her memory with these cruel hours of her first great grief.

When Ulrich, cool, collected, came up to her, she felt a sudden rush of hope and confidence, she burst into tears, and holding out her hands to him, said almost deliriously—"You are good—you are strong—be merciful, and save him."

Ulrich half supported her to the seat. Then he kindly said a few soothing words, and asked what he could do. He supposed she knew that Lise was dangerously ill?

"She is not dead?"

"No—but she may die." The Countess stared at Ulrich through her tears. She had felt from the first that there was something strange about this man, she could not understand him. She vaguely wondered at his self-possession. "It was the bad news about Count Alexis which gave her the shock," continued Franz.

"Then you know all?" said the Countess.

He gave a half smile, and said he believed he knew—all.

Then the Countess poured forth a passionate appeal, mingled incoherent praises of himself, of Alexis, even of Lise . . . urging him to save them both, to sacrifice himself, to prove himself a true hero . . .

"Enough," he said, staying the tirade with a gesture that was so suggestive of disgust that the half-frantic mother blushed and shrank back; "these matters require but few words, Madam. Whatever has to be done, must be done at once."

"Will you go to Alexis—tell him that Lise is dying, and bring him to her?"

From the moment the Countess summoned him he had guessed what she wanted of him. "I will go," he said. "And at once," he added, glancing at his watch.

"But," he continued with suppressed fierceness, "I wish you Madam, to understand that it is not for your sake I do this—nor for your son's, although he has behaved well—nor for Lise's" (he spoke the name with a tender reverence, raising his cap); "it is for simple justice. *I* do not dare to take young lives out of God's hands, and sport with them to please my pride or my selfishness. I have known that which you have known, that your son and Lise love each other with the true, pure affection which is God-given . . . I saw them together, and recognising the Almighty will, would have interfered but to bring them to the happy union which is the Eternal intention in their regard. It is for this alone I act as I do," and with a low bow he was gone.

The astonishment of the Countess was so intense that it did her good. There was another feeling mingled with this, which shamed her and made her think of others rather than of her own selfish anxieties—she saw in Franz her superior, a being so far above herself that in his presence even rank and unspotted pedigree stood aloof and would not lift up their heads . . .

By Lise's couch she passed the hours till a calm sunset gave place to starry twilight. When the moon rose, there was little change in Lise. She lay still and white; her half-open eyes were glazed. The breath came imperceptibly from between her parted lips. To the watchers—the doctor, who sat by the shaded lamp on one side of the bed, and the Countess and the Frau Pastorin, who were together on the other—she looked more and more like a corpse. The window was open . . . a broad stream of red light streamed upon the lawn below, occasionally broken by a flitting shadow; and subdued murmurs of voices were heard in the silence of the sick-chamber. In the sitting-room below, the Pastor was helping the miserable hours to pass, was trying to distract the attention of the Count and Barmann, one absorbed in thoughts of his only son, the other enduring agonies of suspense because of his one dear daughter.

None slept, or attempted to sleep in the cottage that night. Messages went backwards and forwards to the castle at intervals. The doctor invented requirements if only to give the watchers something to do. He knew the castle store-rooms, and every now and then he would suggest some item which would be required "when the patient recovered consciousness."

All the time he said to himself, "She is dying . . . slowly—but dying," and he dreaded the scene in store for him with the unhappy parents, when he should have to tell the truth.

The grey dawn was fighting with the night shadows, all lights began to have a sickly hue, the Count had fallen asleep on the sitting-room sofa, and the Pastor's heavy eyelids would close in spite of him

as he leant back in an armchair talking to Barmann, who incessantly paced the room,—when a footstep was heard on the stair, and the Countess rushed in, saying in a hoarse voice—"All is lost . . . she is dying . . ."

In an instant the men were up, and out of the room, and she was alone in the grey dawn, weeping and wringing her hands . . . calling upon the Almighty to pity her for her interference; it was well meant . . . blaming herself for this catastrophe, bewailing the awful moment when Alexis should come to find Lise—dead . . .

There was a cruel silence everywhere . . . and with the suddenness of a shot fired in the dead of night came a sound in the far distance . . . She started to her feet and listened, stilling her very breath . . . what was it? At first it was indistinct, like the rattle of a dog's chain . . . then it grew louder and plainer—it was the rattle of hoofs upon the hard road . . .

"My boy," she said, with an awful calmness, and sat down to await events as if she were turned to stone.

She heard the bell, Kätchen hurry out—quick footsteps, the sound of Alexis' voice . . . then all was still again . . .

For a few minutes she felt as if she were alone with Death, cut off from life, love, hope—suspended in the darkness of eternal doom. Some one came to her, and she felt a hand on her shoulder; but she only shook her head faintly. But Ulrich, for it was he, spoke firmly and cheerfully, "I bring good news."

"Good news?" she repeated the words vacantly. They conveyed no sense to the dazed, suffering mind. But as he told her in simple, plain words that Lise had come out of her stupor, had recognised them all, and that the doctor had said she would live, she began to understand . . . and when the Count came in and embraced her, and Barmann sobbed incoherent thanks, she awoke to the fact that she had not only been spared lifelong remorse, but had been spared perhaps to joys as yet undreamt of . . . But she turned from the Count, who would have supported her to the sick-room, and appealed to Franz, clinging to him in her weakness as she would have clung to a far loftier, holier presence.

He took her carefully and kindly to the door of the room, then the Pastor, grave but smiling, drew her in, and she saw Lise supported by the Frau Pastorin, and Alexis on his knees by the side of the bed —then, somehow, she was there too, and a faint, weak voice said "Mother."

* * * * * *

When the excitement had subsided, they all inquired for Ulrich. But he had gone, leaving a note directed to Alexis. This contained the ring Lise had given him at their betrothal, wrapped in a paper

on which he had written, "Those whom God has joined together, let not man attempt to put asunder." And this was the last they heard of him for some time.

Lise speedily got well, and Alexis did not join the Black Deaths. But his own regiment was ordered to the seat of war, and he went through the campaign, Lise remaining at the castle, the comfort of his parents. As soon as peace was proclaimed, they were married, and Lise accompanied her young husband to Breslau.

Franz Ulrich remains a bachelor, in spite of his father's constant suggestions to him that he should marry; suggestions to which he replies that there are other matters here below even of greater and more vital interest than "marriage, and giving in marriage," as indeed there are to souls like his—which are as it were eyes stedfastly fixed upon eternity.

Temples and Worshippers in Japan.

By HENRY W. LUCY.

The many gods whose shrines and temples stand thickly in all the towns of Japan, have grown into the condition of deity almost under the eyes of the people. They have been for the most part military heroes or prominent ministers under successive sovereigns. Had the Duke of Wellington lived in Japan, he would by this time have been a god with his shrines and temples, his many priests, and the *rin* raining throughout the day into his gridironed money-box. So would Lord Nelson; so would the first Duke of Marlborough; and Lord Randolph Churchill, instead of busying himself with politics, might have been abbot of the principal family shrine. It was thus that Michizane came to be a deity, and to have his temple at Kyoto and elsewhere. Michizane was third Minister of State to the Mikado towards the end of the ninth century. His rapid advance and his personal influence exciting the jealousy of a colleague named Tokihira, finally led to his degradation and banishment. He died in exile and was buried by the roadside. As his body was being carried to the cemetery in a bullock car the animal stopped, and since it could not by any means be induced to go farther, the disgraced minister was buried on the spot.

There does not seem anything very extraordinary in this incident. The reasonable conclusion would appear to be that the bullock was tired, perhaps having been out on a job earlier in the day. But combined with other portents, the Mikado, troubled in his conscience, saw in this a heavenly sign. He withdrew the decree of banishment, conferred his former earthly rank upon the dead man, and without more to do, made a god of him. The bull which played so prominent a part in establishing Michizane's posthumous career is largely represented in his temple at Kyoto. Amongst other models there are two, one in black marble, and the other a curious speckled red. These bulls and all others in and about the temple are covered with pellets of chewed paper, cast at them by devotees. A man or woman in doubt as to some particular course contemplated, comes here, chews a bit of paper, makes a pellet of it, and standing at some distance throws it at the bull, deciding

according to the spot on which the pellet sticks. Something akin to this pagan habit is found in England where a man halting between two courses determines them by tossing up a halfpenny.

On the left as the temple is approached there is a curious picture gallery, with more bulls and other objects marvellously painted. These also are covered with pellets of chewed paper. I was much struck with one painting representing two men in scanty clothing holding by a halter a lively bay horse. Their astonishment at discovering that the horse has a sky-blue eye is very graphically delineated. Curious-looking animals, understood to be tigers, are carved in great numbers. Wherever they are within reach they have pieces of paper string tied round their forelegs just above the heel, which gives them the appearance of tigers with their garters slipping down. The temple itself is like an old curiosity shop, full of mirrors and lanterns. At the upper step, close by a large cloth covered with *rin*, an old man knelt in prayer. He was terribly in earnest, clapping his hands to arrest the attention of the god, wringing them with gestures of piteous entreaty, and pleading in broken voice for blessing or forgiveness. At the foot of the steps were half a dozen men and women also engaged in prayer. But none had the earnestness of this old man, who neither saw nor heard anything around him.

The temple of Riyomidzu-dera, like that at Asakusa, is approached through an avenue crowded with little shops and penny shows, which give it the appearance of a fair. It was a fête day when we visited it, and a dense crowd was always passing up or down. In the porch of the temple, amongst other votive offerings, was a large lock of greasy black hair tied with string to a wooden frame. This, Ito our guide explained, was the offering of a man who had probably been too much given to drink. He had come here, taken a vow to abstain, and in token thereof had cut off his hair, and hung it up. Another votive offering was a vivid picture of an explosion on a steamship, with full account of the catastrophe, and of the providential escape of the pious votary. In a little recess close by the altar, three priests were driving a flourishing trade in the sale of charms. For a penny I bought two, one warranted to hold me scatheless against thunder, and the other securing for me general good fortune.

Before the altar were seated a row of worshippers repeating the name of Buddha at the rate of sixty times a minute, and marking off the tallies with beads on a string. One man, a skilled practitioner, must have repeated the word a thousand times whilst we looked on, working his hands about the while. With equal expenditure of energy he might in the same

time have knit the foot of a pair of stockings, or mended his clothes, or done some other useful work. To one of the pillars before the altar was attached a wooden box in which were copies of Buddhist Scriptures. Worshippers coming in unprovided, took up one of these little books, said their prayers, returned the book to the box and went their way. At the other side of the altar was a large open trunk, with innumerable bits of bamboo in it having writing upon them. I saw people as they passed throw in a bit of stick. Ito explained that this is one of the most honourable customs of the Church. If a man has at heart any special desire, he will go to the temple, carrying with him as many bits of bamboo as he numbers years. On each he writes his name, age, and the object of his desire. Then he makes the circuit of the temple as many times as he has lived years, praying before every shrine, and as he passes the wooden trunk he throws in one of the pieces of bamboo.

"For instance," I to says, "if I wanted to get back my watch, which I lost when the boat upset in Yokahichi Bay the other day, I would get twenty-one pieces of bamboo, and go round twenty-one times. But I wouldn't do it," he added with stern resolve.

Ito is Shinto, and looks with contempt upon the superstitions of the Buddhists. Yet he is full of charity. His "mudder," leaning towards the ancient faith, Ito makes no effort to proselytise. He even allows the old lady a fixed sum of money per week, so that, relieved from domestic cares, she may spend the whole of her days in worship.

"And she does," Ito says in a tone of resignation: "goes out early in the morning, comes home when the temple is shut up, praying all the day."

This is a common custom among the old people of the Buddhist faith. Having closed their account with life, they devote their remaining days, be they few or many, to propitiating Buddha, wearying him with incessant prayer for admittance into the heavenly state. We saw many of these people in the temple. Two, a neat old lady and a still vigorous old man, were noticeable for the business-like way in which they set about their task. They had taken possession of one of the little chapels that abound in the temple, a small alcove with a shrine crowded with gods, and filled up with little trays bearing food, each labelled with the name of the donor. Both man and woman were on their knees, and each had a tiny wooden hammer with which they incessantly struck a small gong. The old man, with the selfishness of his sex, had in addition possessed himself of a large bronze bell. From time to time he struck this, its sonorous notes drowning the sound of the woman's gong and fixing the attention of Buddha exclu-

sively upon him. All the while both man and woman rapidly prayed, the old gentleman occasionally breaking forth in song, with most comical effect. Like Ito's mother, they had come here in the early morning, and evidently meant to stay till the place was closed. On a cloth before the shrine was a handful of copper coins, doubtless the joint offering of the worthy couple. Judiciously distributed, a threepenny bit will go a long way in this kind of expenditure, and a day so spent need not be costly.

In one of the booths on the way up we saw a string of legal currency which was change for a halfpenny. There were probably fifty metal coins on the string, which are thus prepared for the use of the charitable, and ultimately find their way to the pockets of the beggars who in this part of the island swarm about the temples. A few paces farther on, right opposite a large shrine, was a pleasant tea-house, overlooking the valley. Here women were sitting on the matted floor gossiping over thimblefuls of tea. From this place we got a striking view of the structure of the temple, which is built into the side of the hill, the outer walls being supported on large wooden piles. Between the tea-house and the alcove, where the old people prayed and hammered away at the gong, a panel drawn back disclosed three women sitting over a hibaichi smoking pipes. Next door was another little chapel with two old women and one young one beating gongs and saying their prayers.

Situated at the southern side of the city is Nishi Hou-Gwan-ji, the chief temple of the western branch of this sect of Buddhism. The present building is nearly 300 years old, and is a splendid specimen of the architecture of the time. Unlike the gaudy temples at Nikko, the wood and stone work are left in their natural colour, which centuries have toned down to a soft grey. A feature peculiar to the temple is the extensive suite of state apartments. In these the priests receive distinguished guests, from the Mikado downwards. The largest room has its panels decorated with paintings of storks by famous artists. There are also some wonderful specimens of carved storks about the wood work. The various rooms which, in addition to being connected by a long corridor, open into each other by sliding panels, are each decorated with a special design: one chrysanthemums, another peacocks and cherry-trees, a third with marvellous Chinese landscapes on a dead-gold ground.

Outside the temple is a gateway, which formerly belonged to a Shinto temple, but, as frequently happens with sections of temple-buildings in Japan, it was transported hither. There is much carving on this gateway, the figure on one of the panels telling a

pretty story. Kiyo-yo having had a proposal modestly made to him that he should resign the throne, is here figured in the act of washing the ear that has suffered the indignity of receiving the proposal. So great is the insult that nothing less than a waterfall will serve the cleansing purpose. The artist accordingly puts in the waterfall pretty thick; but Eastern fancy does not stop here. A little farther on are the figures of a man and a cow, the latter drinking from a pool below the waterfall. The man owns the cow, and he is glaring upon Kiyo-yo for thus polluting the water which his cow was drinking. He cannot contain his rage at the thought that his cow should even after a waterfall drink from a stream tainted with such a proposal. I do not know anything in Western literature or art that can go beyond this in expressing contempt.

The Japanese painters do not fall short of the artists in wood in reproducing water effects. One of these state apartments is known as the wave-room. The walls are covered with paintings of desperate seas, looking at first sight like agglomerations of logs rounded at the head and bulging out in the middle. On the ceiling, in every panel, there is a freely drawn object, which I thought was meant to represent large shells of a species unknown in Great Britain. These are, however, waves, and it is the glory of the artist, that though there are over a hundred, each one is turned a different way—a terrible sight for Ito, who has not yet got over his experiences by sea. The temple itself, like all belonging to this particular sect, is very plain; this characteristic being so marked that it might almost be taken for a Shinto temple.

It was close upon four o'clock when we arrived, and at the stroke of the hour a priest appeared and drew the gilt shutters across the altar. With the punctuality that marks the movements of the British workman at the dinner-hour, he shut out from further devotion for the day a young man who, conscious of being late, had been vigorously praying. There were three shrines, and as one was closed by the business-like priest, the young man hopped off to the other. When the last panel of the last shrine was closed, he skipped across the matted floor to the open door, where he had left his clogs. We passed on to the Amida Do, and there, before the yet open shrine, knelt the industrious young man.

Close by this temple is a pavilion, named, in the Japanese language, after The Flying Clouds. This was to me one of the most interesting buildings in Kiyoto, for here, more than 200 years ago, lived in the flesh Hideyoshi, an able and valiant Japanese, who left his mark deeply cut in the history of his country. Apart from this personal connection, the building is

attractive by reason of its age. In a city periodically burned, this narrow, lofty building has stood unharmed. It is set in an old-fashioned garden, dark with the shadow of ancient trees, and crowded with conifers. There is a pool, in which grow gold fish of prodigious size. They seem as if they had been born in Hideyoshi's time, and had been slowly growing ever since.

The place is in the custody of an old gentleman, the nimblest for his years I ever looked upon. He was dressed in an old brown kimona, shaped something after the fashion of a monk's gown. He wore no hat, had not shaved for many days, and was in a state of spasmodic excitement at sight of three Europeans, who would probably tip him before they left. We were in constant danger of losing him, as he generally ran ahead through the winding walks, returning to find us standing belated, discussing by which turn he had disappeared. He was into the house like a shot, and, before we had reached the door, he had opened the side of a room, and was loudly clapping his hands over the pool beneath. This looked like active lunacy; but he was only calling the fish, who came up under the window in shoals. A steep staircase, with steps about twice the ordinary height, led up, room over room, to the topmost story, where was Hideyoshi's bedroom. It was of course bare, but there were some curious and interesting panels on the wall representing the old nobles in wonderful costumes, their skirts swelled out by exaggerated crinolines. One, with a curiously flattened look, was squatted on the floor, under a weight of clothes that seemed to preclude the possibility of his ever getting up again. He was, Ito said, "something under Hideyoshi," and indeed he did look sat upon. Another panel held all that was left of a view of Fuji, faded now almost to nothing. Some Japanese humourist has called it "the Fuji of good manners," because in order to catch its dim outline you must bend low.

Hideyoshi's bath is on the ground-floor, just as he left it when he was steamed for the last time. It is a somewhat elaborate contrivance, with a furnace and pipes for conveying the steam into the box in which the great man used to sit and parboil himself. This humble domestic appanage seemed to bring one very near to old Japan. It was as if Hideyoshi had but just stepped out after taking his bath, as if the Shogun's empire, with its blindness, its ignorance, its feudalism, and its ferocity, were still a living thing, and the new Japan, with its railways, its telegraphs, its post-office, its system of national education, its liberal foreign policy, and its coming House of Commons, a disordered dream.

"When Poverty comes in."

A CHAPTER OF A WOMAN'S LIFE, EDITED BY
LADY LINDSAY (OF BALCARRES).

"WHEN Poverty comes in at the door, Love flies out of the window." So people are wont to say. But I cannot believe it; I never can; I never shall. It is not so much the cruelty of the proverb as its utter untruth which offends me. For, surely, when Poverty comes in at the door, Love, armed with sudden strength, puts forth the mightier and diviner side of his nature to resist the foe; nay, perhaps, I should rather say that God knits our sorely-tried hearts more closely than before with a strange and beautiful link.

It happened thus to Phil and me. Poverty had lifted the latch, had opened the door, gently at first, then more rudely and noisily; Poverty looked in, and stared us in the face.

I was sitting alone by the hearth of our cheerless room. It was late afternoon, and cold and gusty autumn. The windows rattled every now and then; the sad wind howled in the chimney; the dead leaves, swirling outside, darkened the leaden grey of the sky.

I was trying to warm my thin hands over the fire, slowly turning round and round with listless touch the wedding-ring that had grown so loose of late. I was certainly very very thin, and, besides, there was a nasty blue mark upon one of my wrists.

Little Charlie lay asleep in his crib. Florence had gone out marketing; the child showed an aptitude for such household avocations, and her pretty piteous face often induced the grocer to allow us longer credit than my most earnest entreaties were able to obtain.

Our room was bare, terribly bare; the floor was dirty and carpetless; everywhere around were evidences of our straitened circumstances; even the furniture looked forlorn and impoverished. Near the window, on an easel, was an unfinished picture, whilst upon the dusty table hard by lay a palette whereon the colours had grown dry, a tattered old copy of the 'Morte d'Arthur,' and a few paintbrushes scattered carelessly about. The work was there, but not the worker. My husband was out; he had ceased to try to work, and indeed, owing to his continued ill-success in pecuniary matters, there seemed some reason for his perpetual refrain whenever he chanced to be at home: "Work, work, what is the use of working? Oh! for God's

sake don't bother me, Susie! Some men are born to ill-luck. What on earth is the use of working?"

As I sat there all alone I gazed at my wedding-ring and sighed. I sighed, for I remembered the first few years of our married life, when "work" to Phil meant not only *use* but *pleasure* also, when he held me in his arms during the sweet summer evenings, and unfolded to me his dreams for the future—our future. I sighed as most women sigh, I fancy, whose hopes are dashed to the ground, whose illusions are broken and defaced. And then I recognised the sound of a well-known heavy step on the stair, and Phil came in.

He banged the door as he entered; he looked pale and weary as well as irritable. I needed but to cast one quick glance at his wan face to read there the result of the afternoon's quest; despondency and disappointment were plainly legible.

"Well," he muttered, as he impatiently kicked off his boots and flung them to the other end of the room—"well, there's nothing more to be done; it's the same old story over again."

"Is it, Phil?"

"Is it? Is it indeed? why, I tell you it is. Curse the whole thing! I don't mean to go near any of those disgusting dealers again. I'll sail for America next week, and try my luck in the mines, or whatever comes to hand. Anything for a new life."

I was silent. Phil was in a hard mood, but that, alas! was nothing new. At the thought of his going to America my heart sank within me. What was to become of me and the children? We had nothing to live upon. Yet such was not my bitterest thought, but rather this: I could not bear to part from Phil.

Then he spoke querulously:

"What a dreary hole it is! Have you got no supper for me, nothing to eat after my long day's tramp?"

"There is some bread and cheese in the cupboard, dear, nothing else, and I am afraid we have but little left even of that."

I got up and fetched the food, and placed it before Phil. He ate mechanically, his eyes fixed in sullen meditation on the ground.

"You understand?" he asked after a while.

"Understand what, Phil?"

"That I am off to America next week for certain."

"Oh no, no!"

"But I tell you yes. What is to prevent me? I am sick of this life, sick of everything."

"I will prevent you, dear," I said, tremulously. "Oh no, I will not let you go, I will not let you leave me."

"You will not?" asked Phil with a contemptuous laugh, and a curse. But I held closely to him.

"I will not. Oh, Phil, listen to me, listen."

Ah, he rose abruptly in anger, and pushed me away, and, as I tried to follow him, he roughly seized my arm, and threw me from him, so violently that I reeled and nearly fell.

I was weak and ill, I suppose, from want of food, for the whole room seemed to swerve and spin. I raised my hand to my forehead, and, as I did so, Phil caught sight of the blue mark upon my wrist, the mark his cruel grasp had imprinted but yesterday. And then, all suddenly, he turned away with a look of utter anguish, and flung himself down again in his seat at the table, and buried his face in his hands.

There was a moment of silence between us. I could hear Phil's long-drawn breaths; I could see his shoulders painfully heaving—I knew that he was weeping.

Oh God! My husband, my own!

He had wasted his patrimony, he had brought us to this dire pass through folly and recklessness, he had been unkind, even cruel to me; above all, he could, without a pang, propose to leave me. Well, it was all true, and yet I loved him with my whole heart. Whatever Phil's faults had been, he had never done me the wrong that is to a woman's loving soul the most unforgivable sin—he had never neglected me for another woman. His heart, hardened though it might be, was mine and mine alone, no influence but mine had swayed him since our marriage day; miserable as we were, we were together in misery, and no one stood between us. His faults were mine, as his misfortunes were mine. "For better, for worse," ay, this was the worse surely; yet it was our mutual "worse," our "worse" to wrestle with and conquer.

I have heard it said that in moments of great emotion, even like in the moment of death, we see the past pictured before our eyes. I seemed to see him then, my Phil, just as when in our bright old days he sat and painted under the wild peach-trees, singing or whistling whilst I laughed and listened. The close London walls disappeared, the ground under our feet was once more carpeted with crocus and cyclamen; the air seemed laden with balmy scents; down in the pools of the meadows, yellow iris flashed among the long green flags.

Yonder, instead of the murky fog, I saw once more between the chestnut-trees the brown towers of Este, where Petrarch and Laura, where Phil and I, spent happy hours of love. Ah me! I could stop no longer, I hurried to him; I knelt down on the floor beside my husband as he sat broken down by his sorrow, and, whilst I stole my arms softly about his neck, my heart's love came rushing up to my eyes and lips, and went out towards him in one cry:

"Oh, Phil, Phil!"

He raised his head slowly, and turned towards me. His face was white and stained, seared almost with the traces of tears; it shook me to the soul to see that dear face so marred. And then, whilst his eyes scanned my face curiously, he took my hand in both of his with trembling touch, and kissed the blue mark on my wrist.

"Phil," I whispered, as the tears streamed down my own cheeks, "Phil, my Phil, there is no sorrow that two people cannot bear, if only they bear it hand in hand."

"Do you still love me, child?"

"Oh, but it is so difficult to unlove," I answered quickly.

And so it must surely be, methinks, to us women, who comprehend but few gradations of affection, and to whom it seems absolutely necessary to love "all in all, or not at all."

"My poor little wife," said Phil with a long sigh.

And thereupon he took my wrists again, and held them, and kissed them, softly first, then ardently and with that fierce masculine love we foolish hearts hold dearer than all, and then he stroked my face with both his hands, and kissed and kissed it till he kissed away the tears, and I could not but smile a glad little smile in my deep content. And, whilst he comforted me, tears stood in his own eyes yet, but the beautiful light of tenderness, together with a brave new purpose, had come into them also, and shone there; it was as though an evil spirit had been exorcised, and an angel had entered into his rightful dominion once more.

"Two people can do a great deal, shoulder to shoulder, my Susie; that is true," said Phil at last.

As he spoke, I bethought me of an old proverb: "*Il n'y a que le bonheur qui se double en se partageant*," and I fancied that if Phil and I could agree to share our sorrow we must needs also double our joy. So I laid my head on Phil's shoulder, and we sat on in silent sympathy, whilst the long afternoon shadows gradually filled the room. My heavy burdens seemed dropping from my tired heart, one by one, and a passionate sense of happiness warmed and surrounded me, even though, all the while, Poverty, standing at our threshold, had opened on us the chill blasts of want and suffering.

Next morning, early, Phil drew me gently towards his easel.

"Sit for me," he said, "and let me copy this poor little pale face of yours."

He set to work eagerly, with unaccustomed zest and vigour, and so he worked well, and the sketch grew into beauty under his touch, and presently bore evidence of a master's hand.

In the afternoon he went out; his mood, his very manner had changed; he wore the promise of success in every look and feature. I sat and sang to the poor hungry little children during his absence.

My heart had grown so light, I felt such unbounded faith in Phil, that I was not surprised, when he returned, to hear a joyous quick step upon the stair, or to see the happy expression of his face. Yes, he had made an excellent bargain with a picture dealer (whom, by-the-bye he never again abused), and, by this means, he was to be employed for several months; meanwhile, we were freed from all present anxieties.

The turn of the tide came for us then; that was the beginning of our prosperity; the world seemed suddenly to recognise a genius that it had crushed before. I am told this is often the case; I don't know; to me it seems that our success dates from the day when Phil and I wept in each other's arms in that meagre room—where the sad wind moaned, and the dark clouds of poverty and sorrow, and, what is far worse, a chill mistrust of each other, had gathered about us, and threatened to overwhelm us.

Phil does not sup on bread and cheese now; he invites his friends to a cosy dinner in our pretty house. After dinner, we all adjourn to the studio, where the walls are hung with silks and tapestries, and where the men, lounging in luxurious armchairs, smoke and criticise my husband's last new picture (which is already secured by an eminent art-collector). Meanwhile, the ladies, gathering round the piano, bid me to sing those songs of Schubert with Heine's weird words, the subtle pathos of which is to them, perchance, but a partly-solved problem.

Upstairs, Florence and Charlie sleep serenely in their soft white beds, and a kindly nurse sews by the shaded lamp in the adjoining room.

Yet sometimes, ah! sometimes, in the very midst of our new-found peace and luxury, my heart turns back to dwell on a very different chapter of my life, a chapter that, like so many incidents in our past lives, seems almost equally fraught with joy and grief. Almost; not quite. I dare not say whether it be grief or joy that predominates in the tender memory of that one day; to say so might seem ungrateful for the happy present.

But within me a strong feeling rises, and I am tempted to go out into the homes of misery that, alas! so thickly cover the land, and preach a new doctrine, and say:

"When Poverty comes in at the door, bid Love stand ready to defy him!"

The Model.

The noontide whitens to the South,
Campagna parches in the drouth
Of Midsummer's full days;
The dank scirocco seethes aloud,
The air is as a heated cloud
That from some furnace strays:
Madonna mia! of thy grace
Refresh the burning of my face.

Here at thy shrine, where lilies sweet
Encluster'd lie before thy feet,
My eyes forget the glare,
My thoughts escape the city wall,
I hear again the goatherd's call,
I breathe the fresher air:
Madonna! must these gates of Rome
For ever keep me from my home?

Why was I singled from the rest
To leave that dewy meadow crest,
Renounce my loved ones' care?
Why was it that my eyes and braids
Were darker than all other maids'?
My stature, too, more rare?
Madonna! children must have bread—
My beauty was of price, they said.

With curious coifs I now bedeck
My hapless head; around my neck
Strange amulets depend;
All day, begirt with kirtles quaint,
To some coy quean, or some fair saint,
Its grace my form must lend:
Madonna! in such vacant toil
So tediously the hours uncoil!

Three years (come holy Lammas-tide)
I left my mother's guardian side
To lodge with stranger folk,
And promised with my last caress
No faithless lips with mine should press,
No trothless love be spoke:
Madonna dear! thou knowest well
I have no secret shame to tell.

I fealty kept. My heart, so long
Untun'd to note of master song,
Beats on in monotone;
Unstirr'd by gifts or guerdon's lure,
The stream of life is still as pure
As this clear altar-stone:
Madonna! be it now confessed
The spell that has my soul possessed.

Within the octave of that day
When our dear Lord put death away,
And rose beyond the tomb,
My footsteps led me down the street
Which students throng, anon to meet
In some grave lecture-room:
Madonna! was it chance, or cause,
That bade me near that gateway pause,

Where lingered one of nobler mien
Than others are? He should have been
Cast from some kingly mould;
As serpents fascinate the bird
He marked me there—with one brief word
My service then was sold:
Madonna! for that moment's space
I blessed the beauty of my face.

As fruit within the flower lives,
As bud, matur'd, the blossom gives,
As April ushers May,
So from my newly ripen'd heart
A sudden passion swift did start,
I bent beneath its sway:
Madonna! for my weal or woe
I love him!—that is all I know.

He comes, a painter, from the land
Where silent snows eternal stand
High in the crystal air;
Where, through the frozen winter nights,
The sky reflects with arctic lights
Phantasmagoria rare;
Madonna! in a world so drear
Must love not be disbarr'd by fear?

I stand him for Saint Cicely,
She with her wondrous melody
Awoke an angel's love;
Ah! could I from some charmèd scale
Draw siren chords which might prevail
This mortal's soul to move!
Madonna! tapers here shall burn
If I persuasive strains may learn!

Hour after hour, intent, he sits,
Too loud the tiniest lace-pin quits
My bodice for the ground;
The restless brushes, as they seek
To match the colour in my cheek,
Swirl with a sable sound:
Madonna! an he would but speak!
Alas! my mother's vow grows weak.

I who would all my wit ungird
To gain one look, one tender word,
His silence stern must share;
The while with tears of pride and pain
My vision dims, my lips must fain
A smile ecstatic wear:
Madonna! is to love so well
Akin to joys of heaven or hell?

His brows are folded deep with thought,
No frailer feeling there has wrought
An unaccustomed line;
Alone, within his world of Art
He dwells; with him I have no part,
No fitness to combine:
Madonna! chide me not; be kind,
Life is so barren—love so blind.

I could not count with him to mate,
To weave into his ampler fate
My incompleter aim;
Nor shall it otherwise be said—
"She moves with him, unblest, unwed,"
A tarnish on his name:
Madonna! in its flexion far
The planet ranks below the star.

He 'waits me—now thy shrine I quit,
Once more his influence to submit,
Benignant or malign;
As midnight suns inflame the skies
He draws me with his northern eyes
To dream of love divine:
Madonna! must I then forego
The dual life which all should know?

Vouchsafe thy virgin veil to spread
Around my frail defenceless head,
Shield my too wistful soul;
Henceforth shall no man move my heart,
I'll choose with thee a maiden's part,
Long as the years shall roll:
Ave Maria! full of grace,
God's glory shine upon thy face!

COTSFORD DICK.

Sweden.

Travellers in Sweden who cannot put up with coarse food and hard beds will find it the safer plan to keep to the beaten track, but for those who are hardy enough to disregard comfort in search of novelty and adventure, let me recommend a little tour made in August 1879 through the provinces of Angermanland and Dalarne, the former the garden of Sweden, the latter the stronghold of national costume and customs.

The only information we had been able to obtain was, that we were to take our passage from Stockholm in a steamer bound for Hernösand, carry with us as little luggage as possible, and as much tinned provisions as we could make room for.

Behold us then a party of four, about eight o'clock one Wednesday morning, standing on the deck of a steamer, which for trimness and comfort would hold its own against most yachts, taking a farewell look at the city of Stockholm. The misty veil which had hung like a cloud, and caused us many forebodings, began to lift as we were passing the lovely Djürgardens, and by the time we reached the fortress of Waxholm a dazzling sun gave promise of a glorious day.

In addition to our own party there were not more than a half-dozen passengers going to Hernösand and Orsnovik on business. The captain, to our delight, could speak English, and had plenty of leisure to answer the many questions with which we constantly plied him.

"You'll tell us when Bomarsund is in sight?"

"How long before we shall reach the open sea?"

"Is there any chance of falling in with seals at this time of year?"

Bravely did he endeavour to satisfy all our demands, assuring us that on that misty spot on the horizon, which he pointed out as the Aland Islands, we had discovered the exact point where once the famous fortress of Bomarsund stood; being as delighted as we were when two amiably-intentioned seals were perceived gambolling near enough for us to be able to assert, on our return home, that we had actually seen these fascinating creatures disporting themselves at large in their native element, and giving to such as needed it the comforting promise that when we should lose sight of land and be out in the open sea there would be no more motion of the vessel than was then felt. Throughout the whole voyage there was not a movement that could cause the worst sailor any uneasiness: the wind blew soft and

fresh, the sun lasted until nearly nine o'clock, and then left behind him daylight enough for those on deck to read for an hour longer. Very unwillingly did each of us seek our berths, which in keeping with everything on board this charming steamer—by name the *Angermanland*—were comfortable and clean, and we all slept soundly until five o'clock, when we were awakened to hear we had reached Hernösand, and that after breakfast we should leave our comfortable quarters for another steamer which would take us on to Sollefteå. To the captain of this vessel, the good-natured captain of the *Angermanland* offered to introduce us, thinking that as, like himself, he could speak English, he might be able to give us some information as to the best means of exploring the district we were bent on seeing.

Pending this introduction we made the most of the time allowed us in looking about Hernösand, a town of little or no interest to the traveller, although of some importance in the province, being a bishop's see and the residence of the governor of Wester-Norrland. The graveyard was the only spot in which we cared to linger, and that because of the curious arrangement which seems to apportion to each family a square plot of sandy earth divided off by shrubs or trees. In the middle of this square a flower-bed, with perhaps a stone, urn, book, or piece of rockwork, denotes the grave; and so placed as to contemplate the names and inscriptions on these stones, chairs and garden-seats are arranged, many of which had evidently been recently occupied, for on several of the mounds were bouquets and wreaths of freshly-cut flowers. This was the only really carefully-kept churchyard we saw, and subsequently seeing the small number of graves surrounding some church which served for a widely-spread district, we were curious as to where they buried the dead, a curiosity not satisfied until farther on, when we were present at some funerals.

But while we have been lingering in the churchyard of Hernösand, the steamer, which is to take us to Sollefteå, is getting up her steam, her captain has come on board, and we must hurry back to be placed under his protection and start off. That one is able to get one's meals on board these various steamers adds considerably to comfort and independence, more especially in Sweden, where you seldom find any sign or announcement to guide you, and in most of the smaller places, the Källare—rooms in which you can be supplied with food—are on the first floor. At the onset of our travels few things disturbed us more than the system of not being able to get anything to eat at the hotels. We would look in our guidebooks for the best hotel at which to stop, and reaching it tired and hungry, be packed off to seek our dinner or supper at some other end of the place; but as this plan is not invariable it is not possible to decide beforehand what you will have to put up with.

Therefore we appreciated the certainty that prevailed on board the steamboats that at fixed hours meals were always to be had. The dinner-hour on this occasion was three o'clock, just at the time when, after getting clear of Hernösand, the flattest part of the scenery is passed. A little farther on the banks grow higher, the river widens, narrows, opens out into large bays, and winds in and out small islands. Constant stoppages were made at the various wharves, where we landed or took on board passengers, delivered packages, and received fresh merchandise. All these wharves appear to be depots for wood, and round many of them ships of different nations were getting in their cargoes of planks and cut timber. Our attention was directed to one place where a disastrous fire had recently destroyed the large saw-mills together with eighty thousand trunks of trees. Gradually this aspect of busy life began to disappear, our way became more intricate, and in many parts the steamer's course was marked out by bare trees with a tuft of branches left to stand well out of the water on the top. The captain did not seem displeased at the praise bestowed on his navigation, which he confessed needed a practised hand, as in addition to the difficulties of guiding the vessel through these narrow channels were the dangers to be avoided from the huge trunks of trees which came rushing down the stream at a tremendous rate. Engrossed in watching the manner of our progress, we had scarcely noted how fast the shades of evening had overtaken us; but now, although close by the quay, the faces of those standing on it were indistinct, and it was no small relief when the captain asked us not to be in a hurry, as the house in which we were to put up for the night being some distance off, it was his intention to see us safely there; he added, moreover, in reference to a conversation we had had, that while we were getting our supper he would hunt up a man who had lived many years in Australia, spoke English well, and it was hoped would not unwillingly supply horses and act as our guide through this "Garden of Sweden" into which we were resolved to penetrate. Garden! Each one had his own quiet smile, as, by the light of the information we had been receiving, a mental picture was conjured up. Already we were nearly two days' journey from the latitude at which the oak and apple-tree cease to grow; the sight of some seals at the mouth of the river had given rise to stories of the severities which, at no such distant date, would set in, when snow would cover all around, and ice lock up this wealth of water.

At Hernösand as well as at Sollefteå, Laps constantly came, and in front of each house, sledges were piled up with hatchets, ladders, and snow-ploughs. In the midst of such surroundings was it likely that the face of nature would look smiling? Our spirits grew a little faint as we followed our pioneer along a rough road shut in by tall trees,

nor were we reassured when, arrived at the so-called inn, instead of the welcome from a smiling host, a couple of shaggy dogs sniffed growling round our legs, and a stolid sleepy girl answered nay to every question. No rooms, no larder, no landlady; everybody out for the day and had not come home. Happily our captain was not a man to be daunted: pushing the girl on one side, he possessed himself of her candle, led the way upstairs, installed the ladies in the bedrooms and then went down to inquire into the resources of the larder, reappearing in due time with the cheering intelligence that our tea was being made, and some eggs and dried reindeer would come in with them.

After seeing us seated at supper, off he went to hunt up our guide for the morrow, so that before we went to bed our plans were settled. The tour was to be made in three days, the guide, whose occupation was that of ostler to some extensive ironworks in Sollefteå, providing and driving the two horses attached to a carriage roomy enough to take us and our baggage, now supplemented by a basket of white bread, which, as well as biscuits, tea and brandy, we found useful; the tinned meat we did not need.

Certainly the faces of the two ladies were a trifle blank when at nine o'clock on the following morning, everything being pronounced in starting order, they were invited to take their seats. "Three inside and one out," said the driver, whose Californian education had fitted him to pass muster for a born Yankee; and on he went with the stowing away of his own particular reserve, coiling up a good supply of stout rope, "in case of a break down I guess," and displaying with becoming pride a murderous hatchet, which with a saw and file, in case of getting "a smash up," he bet would be found handy. All being satisfactorily accomplished he mounted his box, settled himself beside his companion, gave it as his opinion that the three behind would shake down better when he'd started, cracked his whip, and helter-skelter off we went through Sollefteå on to the road by which we should reach some falls which formed the principal object in our first day's journey.

Some little distance along this road we stopped to inspect the interior of a hut belonging to a Lap, who had established himself in the neighbourhood of Sollefteå. In winter Laps come frequently into this district of Sweden, more particularly during the time when the fairs are held, bartering and selling their skins, and in most part spending the money they get in spirit, which they drink until they fall senseless in the road, where for days they lie half buried in the drift of snow.

It struck us that they must be equally indifferent to heat or cold, for in the hut we visited there was neither window nor chimney, the door was kept close shut, and, though outside the sun was scorching,

the occupants were all seated round a blazing fire. On the wall was hung some woollen blanket stuff, a couple of skins lay on the ground, a few pots and pans stood on a shelf, and they pointed to a gaily painted wooden box as the repository of their Sunday clothing; but not a vestige of bed or bedding. The man was absent, but his wife, a baby, and two boys permitted our inspection, and, in gratitude for some small coins at parting, shook us warmly by the hand, wishing us good health and a good journey.

The road lay through fields of wheat, rye, and barley—everywhere abundance—gladdening eyes that for years had not looked upon such a harvest of plenty. At length a sharp bend, and we seemed suddenly removed from the region of cultivation: in place of golden grain our way was bordered with juniper-bushes and small firs springing out from a carpet of cranberries; ferns, mosses, and familiar hedge flowers filled every nook; while overhead we were sheltered by splendid birches, their trunks white and glistening in the light. This luxury of growth lasted until we reached the meadow-land leading to the most accessible approach to the falls, which our guide regretfully assured us we should not see in their usual splendour, owing to there having been no rain for more than six weeks.

Piloted by him we reached the point at which we were to scramble down, get over huge boulders, do Blondin across single planks, and make our way as best we could across to where two men were employed in fishing. Our powers of belief had been rather taxed by the account given by our guide of the numbers of salmon caught in these regions, but after passing two pools, in each of which five and six good sized fish lay flung, we began to waver. Was he to be believed when he said that one needed no permission, and might catch from twenty to thirty good salmon a day? We took up our position at a favourable spot, close enough to watch the movements of the fishers—there were two, one on each side of the eddy of water. The one on our side was most dexterous; his apparatus consisted of two or three ash poles of various lengths, each provided with several feet of strong copper wire, ending in a running noose about sixteen inches in diameter.

Having selected a pool or eddy at the foot of a fall, and made choice of the pole in length best adapted for his purpose, he took a firm stand on the rock above. The noose is then gently dropped and carried down by the stream; again and again this manœuvre is repeated, until the fisher's practised hand tells him he has touched a fish. With a rapid jerk the pole is withdrawn, the jerk soon steadied if the weight of a twelve pound salmon is struggling in the noose, but ending in a whip over our heads if the noose runs out, having slipped over the salmon's tail.

We sat for more than an hour engrossed in watching this sport and witnessing the capture of these fish. Questioning the man, we found the result of his morning's work, so far, had been a catch of eighteen fish, varying from four to fourteen pounds in weight. The fisher on the opposite side was able to hold up for our view some fine fish, but not having so quick a hand the noose went more often empty over his head. The men were not permitted to sell; at 6 P.M. their employer would arrive and with him those who desired to purchase.

Everywhere we went in this district we were assured that angling is free, neither licence nor payment being necessary. At certain seasons netting is employed.

With the cheering confidence that where salmon was so plentiful starvation need not be feared, we obeyed the summons to return to our carriage and push on our way towards Ed, the station at which we were to get dinner and supper—our mid-day meal had consisted of hard-boiled eggs—and spend the night.

This out-of-the-track excursion was to introduce us to some new experiences. Inns and hotels would no longer be found at our service, and for the necessary bed and board we were to be indebted to some peasant farmer or shopkeeper sufficiently well-to-do to inhabit a house in which two or more rooms could be told off for the use of stray travellers. This accommodation they are bound by law to supply, and on a board, which is so placed as never to obtrude itself on the seeker's notice, may be found the announcement that in this or that direction will be found the Gästgivergard of the village. The Gästgivergard, whose resources we were about to tax, added to his other occupations the post of government fish-culturer. The river ran close to his house. Here and there a net hung drying from a tree.

Visions of smoking salmon! How hungry we all felt, and how confident of the welcome that awaited us. In a place so remote from village or neighbour, what a happy chance must be reckoned an unexpected guest. Notwithstanding, though, that a whole volley of soda-water corks—by the imaginary drawing of which our guide urged on his horses' pace—occasioned us to clatter at a furious rate up to the very house door, not a sign of human life was visible. The rain was coming down in a steady pour; the shades of eve were falling fast. Heavenly powers! what a situation!

"It's all square," said the guide, smiling at our lengthening countenances, as he dropped himself down into the very porch from which a few moments later he reappeared with the assuring promise that they'd manage our business for us; then pulling the horses across a plot of grass to a building on the other side, he invited us to dismount and enter.

"But where are the people of the house?"

"Oh, they'll show up in time," he said. "They're over that side. That's the kitchen there; this is your side of the place," and he led the way into a bare, desolate-looking room, with a great stove in one corner, a bed in the other, a table and four chairs in the middle.

"They know we want something to eat?"

"Yes; they're seeing about it. I told them to get it ready as soon as possible."

I smile now to recal the happy ignorance with which we took our seats and whiled away the first half-hour in pleasant anticipation; then gradually, seeing no sign appear, we grew impatient, hunted up our guide, sent him to inquire, lost our tempers, recovered them again, used strong language, cut jokes—all to no purpose in quickening the movements of the most immovably slow people on the face of the earth. With nothing to cook, it will take a Swedish peasant two hours at the very least to set on the table a dish of cold boiled fish—salmon, eels, or pike—boiled eggs, a jug of beer, and some tea. It is quite useless to hurry them; they won't be hurried. They don't want you; they wish you had not come; and though, when you depart, you will find them ready enough to accept the payment they require, its anticipation neither gives animation to their faces, nor briskness to their movements.

In the small towns and villages, as well as at these out-of-the-way stations, the people seemed utterly devoid of curiosity, and you may drive up to a door or past a window without having a head lifted or an eye turned in your direction. The struggle to maintain life seems so hard, the grinding presence of poverty so oppressive, that they appear dead to all beyond the toil and labour to get daily food.

Here in this district, where during the short summer Nature is so lavish of her gifts, one passes on and on, astonished at seeing nowhere a sign of wealth or even easy comfort in living—no country houses, no parks nor carefully-kept pleasure-grounds, and, in our sense, no prosperous farms. Some scattered wooden buildings, surrounded by patches of rye and barley, with a little fenced-off bit for hardy vegetable, indicate the abode of the peasant farmer, who apparently owns but few beasts and seldom any poultry. Wood being cheap, and land to be had for next to nothing, many of the rooms in these houses are large, but the furniture is scanty and of the rudest description. The beds are frequently nothing better than two badly-joined-together sacks of hay dropped into a well sofa, which serves as a seat by day. When anything superior to this is to be obtained, it is an iron frame, made on a telescopic principle, which shuts up with ease and draws out with difficulty, the vantage point of which is, that you are able to hang your legs over the end

and you are spared from barking your unhappy shins against its sides. In this house, which we reached for the first night of our stay, we were treated to both species of accommodation, and were able to compare notes on the following morning as to the extent of our individual suffering. By dint of constantly egging on our guide we had stirred him up to try and obtain something better for our breakfast than had been given us for supper, which, after all our waiting, consisted of dried reindeer, eggs, and a tin of our own preserved meat. "Surely," we said, "they must have fish of some sort;" but no—although in the river, whose rush was sounding in our ears, they had but to drop a line and success was certain, from some reason we could get nothing set before us but a dish of beans stewed with bacon, which for want of better fare we managed to clear up, and then prepared to start. The sun was shining, the early morning air blew fresh, the atmosphere was clear without a trace of haze or mist to interrupt our sight of the spread of country, richly wooded, and intersected with lakes and the winding river. At each ascent, when we jumped out to ease the horses, we discovered quantities of raspberries, dewberries, whortleberries, and to us a new and delicious species called here the arctic raspberry. The flowers were nearly over, but great bunches of ruddy hips told there had been a wealth of roses, and our driver said when he had last gone by in the spring, the ground was white with lilies. Now and then during the day we passed through some small hamlets composed of a few scattered houses, a farm, and some hay-ricks, but nothing which approached a village; neither, when during the rest at midday we climbed to the summit of a stiffish hill, was a trace of any place more important to be seen. Our destination was Liden, a lovely summer retreat with some good falls and another chance of seeing more fishing. We reached the village about four o'clock, and by the advice of our guide applied for accommodation at the house of the inspector of forests. The inspector was away, but a charming sister offered to receive the party, and one glance at her face decided us to remain. She was the first very pretty girl we had seen, and the evident struggle she had to make, so that her shyness should not interfere with her desire to give us welcome, stole away each of our hearts. We were all seized with the desire to say something in Swedish. "Where was the dictionary? what was the word for pretty, charming, sweet?" Would the guide tell us something polite to say to her? Before we had been there five minutes the little gipsy had mastered the situation and was smilingly appropriating the compliments we were paying her. She had led the way to the sitting-room, in this case a prettily furnished apartment with pinks, oleanders, and geraniums blossoming in pots about it, and a trellice of tiny-leaved ivy carefully trained over the walls. The house

in all its appointments was immeasurably above anything we had seen or were to see. The bedrooms were separate, and we could sleep without insect powder, which in almost every case is an absolute necessity. Before dinner we visited the falls and again became interested in watching the sport of the fishermen. It was carried on after the same fashion which we had witnessed the day previous, and success was shown by the fine salmon which lay struggling together in the pools near. Grayling, pike and roach are very plentiful. Angling is permitted free. Unfortunately we had but little time left to linger at Liden; our holiday was drawing to a close, and we had Dalarne still to see. Some day we hope to revisit this charming spot; in the meantime we heartily recommend it to any one who, in order to enjoy good sport, fine air, and pleasant scenery, does not mind a little rough living. In spite of its apparent remoteness, it is not a difficult place to get at, neither is the journey or cost of living expensive. Starting from Hull to Gothenburg, on by the canal to Stockholm, then by steamers first to Hernösand, then to Sollefteå, you arrive in Angermanland, where at once you can bring your rod into play and fish your way along to Liden, where we leave you.

Wood Sorrel.

My dearest love, thy flower's a-bloom
Once more. I've gathered it to-day,—
As thro' the tender forest gloom
I took my lonely way.

Half hid 'neath sprays of bramble vine,
The fragile blossoms light the place,
As once those sad sweet eyes of thine
Lit up a flower-like face.

The self-same charm to thee—to them,
Hath by a word of God been given,
The opal shimmering diadem
Thou wearest now in heaven.

Ah, loved and lost! unequalled maid!
Green are the leaves of fond regret,
By thy lone lover sadly laid
In Spring's gay carcanet.

Thy spirit surely haunts the path
Where I in retrospective mood
Seek the sole solace memory hath,
The bliss of quietude.

Thy footfall light precedes me still,
As sun or shadow falls on grass,
Some potent grace intangible,
O'er me, from thee, doth pass.

And, bending o'er the faint veined flower—
Thine eidolon—on slender stalk,
Again I keep love's trysting hour,
And catch thy low-toned talk.

Mine yet, in some sweet subtle sense,
In stillness, where no rude note jars,
Where Amaranth blooms, and Innocence,
And Sorrel's silver stars.

C. B.

Zéro: A Story of Monte Carlo.

Chapter XV.

THE SISTERS.

All was silent at Villa Kilsyth. The fire burned brightly in Helena's bedroom—that pretty chamber which had been so lovingly prepared by mother and sister for her occupancy, and where the young girl now lay restless, and too bewildered to realise yet what sudden calamity had befallen her. The curtains were drawn, and flames and nightlight shed a flickering glow upon their crimson folds, upon the draped bed and heavy oriental tapestry veiling the doorway. There was a certain sombreness in the furniture and adornments, out of keeping with the brilliancy of Riviera colouring, which reminded Helena of her own room at Hallingford, and heightened the impression that she was acting in a vivid dream. Wherever her eyes wandered they beheld something new yet familiar. Shadows and spectres seemed to fill the room. The brazen *plaques* above the mantelpiece resembled menacing heads; each quaint piece of china upon the whatnots had an eerie individuality. An altar-like cabinet of Florentine manufacture, upon which was reared a massive crucifix and simpering effigy of the Virgin, was reflected grotesquely in a convex mirror opposite. Above it, hung a portrait of her mother. Seen by this dim light, the face seemed to smile with the sweetness of an angel; while in curious contrast, there stood upon a small table near, an enlarged photograph of Madame Fano, which, distorted by some uncertain ray, wore an expression of coldness, almost of cruelty. The clock was on the stroke of twelve.

It was not many minutes since Mrs. Kilsyth had bidden her daughter good-night. Helena, lulled for the time by a composing draught, had lain passive and silent, while her mother remained beside her bed. Mrs. Kilsyth held her daughter's hand and babbled soft regrets and phrases of endearment. With these she mingled vague allusions to Warrender's infatuation for Varuna, confused theories upon the luck at *roulette* which usually attended Madame Fano's suitors, and irrelevant remarks upon Colonel Cazalette's virtues. Helena remembered that Cazalette had carried her upstairs, and her first conscious impulse towards him

had been one of gratitude for thus promptly rescuing her from the gaze of prying eyes and the embarrassment of Warrender's presence. Mid the crowd of impressions which had thickened since her departure from England, he stood out, a distinct and agreeable personality.

Now that she was alone, her former sensation of numbness gave place to extraordinary mental activity. Her brain whirled. Thoughts crowded within her, and seemed to take shape in her imagination. One by one, she strove to gather up the links of experience. Each image and incident—the faces of her travelling companions, the conversation in the train and Cazalette's jesting explanation; the horrible scene in the garden; Varuna's greeting and strange beauty, so much in accord with the Vampire simile; the blending of enthusiasm, chill, and sense of isolation on her own part, which the meeting with her mother had inspired; then Mrs. Featherstone's free allusions, and an impression of something repulsive and to be shunned in the very air of the principality—all thronged her mind and produced in her a state of terror impossible to be endured.

She started up in bed shuddering. Was there none in this array of phantoms who would stretch out to her sympathetic arms. Misery overcame her. She covered her face with her hands and, rocking herself to and fro, sobbed in a passion of grief.

"Oh, I did love him," she whispered between her gasps. "He might have known that I loved him. He might have waited a little longer."

The night lamp went out suddenly. Helena lit the candle by her side. Rising, she put on her dressing-gown and crept towards the fire. A pitiful ghost she looked, with her wan face, her loose hair and tear-beaded eyes. Catching sight of her image in a pier-glass, she said aloud: "I am not to be compared to her. It is no wonder that he has changed."

She sat down in an arm-chair before the fire and mechanically stretched forth her limbs to the warmth.

At this moment Cazalette's words recurred to her—"We are told that vampires used to subsist upon the heart's blood of their victims."

They called a new fear into being. Again she beheld the scene in the garden. Warrender had appeared to be passionately pleading. Was it possible that he had pleaded in vain, and that Varuna, true to the character ascribed to her, had, after luring him to her feet, coldly repulsed him? Helena's heart beat wildly. Oh, better far her own desolation, than that he should suffer. She clenched her little hands and paced the room in a tumult of

agitation. Presently, taking her rosary, she knelt and prayed. After a little while she rose calmer.

As she seated herself again, her glance fell upon what appeared to be a journal, covered with blue paper, lying upon a table near her chair. Upon its outer page was a roughly executed drawing of the landscape with which her eyes had become acquainted that afternoon. Here were the terrace with its marble balustrades, the feathery palms, the curving bay, and lowering mountains in the background. Above the sketch was printed in large letters, "La verité sur Monte Carlo."

Helena stretched forth her hand for the paper. She remembered that it had been bought at Charing Cross by her escort as far as Paris—an old friend of Sir John's—and there laughingly bestowed upon her, with a warning against alarm at its sensationalism. She had thrust the paper into her travelling-bag and had forgotten it till this moment. She now opened and read the publication through from the first word to the last. Hardly had she laid it down when a soft knock sounded at the door; and without waiting for a reply Madame Fano glided in.

She was wrapped in a white dressing-gown bordered with swansdown, which intensified her paleness. Her eyes too were heavy as though she had been weeping.

She advanced to the fireplace and stood facing Helena. The latter rose, but Varuna motioned her back, and cast herself upon the hearthrug at her feet.

"No, no," she exclaimed abruptly, "let me stay here. You are surprised to see me so late. I hoped that I should find you asleep, and I wanted to look at you quietly, and to see how you had changed. You are better now."

The charm of Varuna's voice, with its transitions from harshness to pathos, struck Helena for the first time, and affected her powerfully.

"You are very good," she answered. "I am better now—only restless. Forgive me for having made a scene. I was tired, and the—the strangeness——"

"Heightened by Mrs. Featherstone's audacious chatter! One marvels at the bad taste of mere acquaintances who can thrust themselves thus into critical family situations."

There seemed an underlying meaning in Varuna's last words. Helena was conscious of it, and inwardly trembled. A few moments before, she would have suffered tortures rather than betray herself to her rival, for though her mind had not recognised her sister as such, feeling more swift in its operations had kindled the spark of repulsion. Human nature testifies indis-

putably that it is more bitter to be supplanted by one near of kin than by a stranger. Now she felt as though a will stronger than her own had taken possession of her, and would force her to reveal what it chose. There was relief in the state of partial quiescence. But silence became embarrassing. Varuna broke it by taking up the pamphlet, which lay at Helena's feet, and, glancing rapidly over its pages, said eagerly:

"You have been reading this?"

Helena answered in the affirmative.

"Ah," the sound was something between a sigh and a groan. "No doubt you have been thinking that this is a strange den of iniquity, into which you have innocently fallen."

"Is all that is written there true?" Helena interrogated firmly.

"As to facts, yes, I should suppose so. There would be nothing gained by printing lies; and reality here is tragic enough."

"Are there many such people at Monte Carlo."

"Such as?"

"Those whom that lady, Mrs. Featherstone, spoke of."

"*Divorcées*, &c. Mrs. Featherstone was describing the society to be met at the house of a Russian princess of doubtful antecedents. Do not be afraid. These women shall never come near you. *I* will take care of that."

"But my mother—my mother's friends," began Helena impetuously, and checked herself.

"Say on," said Varuna laconically.

"These things are true," Helena passionately indicated the pamphlet, "and my mother and you—Catholics—*women*—remain here!"

"Yes," answered Varuna gloomily, "we remain—we are slaves to a passion which has ruined thousands, and which is too strong for us even to try to fight against it. The people here like to sprinkle vice with patchouli and rosewater; and they put forth a thousand sophistries to justify the existence of the Tripot. My mother cherishes a private theory that she is under the protection of the saints, and is encouraged in it by the priests, who are paid by the Directors. As for me, I prefer to state the unvarnished truth. If there *be* a Devil on earth, the seat of his government is certainly the Casino of Monaco. My poor child, I shock your sensibilities; but better now than later. Speak what is in your mind—it will do you good."

But Helena made no response to the appeal.

"My pity may seem to you a mockery," continued Varuna;

"but it is genuine. I would have spared you this had it been possible."

"Why should I be pitied? It is not of myself that I am thinking," said Helena, with a resentment that was yet pathetic. She winced under Varuna's probing; every nerve of her being was jarred. She longed to bid her sister depart and leave her in peace, and all the time, was unreasonably impatient with herself for the failure of her efforts to appear warm. "It has been the dream of my life to be with my mother," she continued, not looking up, her manner mournful and abstracted, as though she hardly knew what she was saying. "Young as I was when our home was broken up, I never forgot her soft, pretty face, and gay, loving ways. Often at night I used to wake up and feel her arms round me, as when she bade me good-bye. For years I was bitter and heartsore. My uncle told me when I was nearly grown up that she had become an Atheist, and that it was for this my father had separated us. Then there was an object for prayer. Ah, how I fasted and prayed, till God had brought her back again! I knew by the tone of her letters that she was changed. Since then, she has been my guardian angel. When I have been tempted against my conscience, she has warned me against selfishness, and has bidden me obey the Church. If I pictured a saint, it was my mother's face that I saw. I never dreamed of purity, holiness, self-sacrifice, that I did not think of her .... And through those years she was in this place, among these people! Were my visions false then? Was it all fancy—my childish enthusiasm wasted?"

"No," cried Varuna, her eyes glowing. "Enthusiasm and love are never wasted. Oh, love on, Helena, love always, and be true to your heart's impulses when you may. Love is not fanaticism; it is religion."

Helena started. Varuna's words were the echo of Warrender's passionate protest uttered, it seemed to her, so long ago. Varuna went on:

"Want of enthusiasm is the curse of narrow natures like mine. Cling to your faith. I was wrong, cruel to speak so bluntly. Our mother is the most impulsive, warm-hearted, and in some ways, child-like of women. We have no right to judge her. If she has foibles they have at least never weakened her affection for her daughters. As for the contrast between your ideal and the reality, don't dwell upon it. Ideals are not meant to be realised .... Helena!" Varuna spoke very softly; and bending forward took her sister's hand within her own. "I have something to say to you. Helena, when you were a child—when we were at Hallingford together—you loved me?"

"Yes,—indeed yes—and ever since."

"Till to-day. You will love me no more as in old days. Your ideal of me has vanished too, But if I seem to you cold and unwomanly, and perhaps worse, think that I have been brought up in a harsh school, and that I have suffered deeply. People will tell you here that I am heartless and mercenary. It is true; but there is something of the mother instinct in me still. I have a little daughter. It would be better for her if she were dead; but if she were like you, and exposed to danger as you are now, would I not try to save her? Because we are sisters and, Helena, for the sake of those old days at Hallingford, I am going to ask a promise from you."

Varuna paused for a moment, then continued in a more matter-of-fact manner:

"You asked me why we remained in this place, and I told you that we were slaves to a passion which would not let us go. We are not wholly to blame. Philosophers are beginning to discover that the law of heredity rather stultifies the doctrine of free will. My mother and I, and perhaps you also, have inherited the vice of gambling. It is as fatal as a craving for drink, or any other bad propensity. If we did not play we should go mad. You cannot conceive what the excitement of it is till your stake is put down, and you feel that a mysterious force is at work, which you don't know and never can comprehend, and that it rests on the laws of chance whether your gold is raked away or doubled. What does one care for sermons at a moment when your blood is stirred and you feel yourself *living*? It's like wine to a thirsty drunkard or blood to a wild creature. The test would be too dangerous for you. I will save you from temptation if I can. Swear to me that you will never play at these or any other tables."

"Is that all?" said Helena with mournful wonder. "See how readily I do what you ask." She took up her rosary and kissed the crucifix as she solemnly gave the promise Varuna had demanded. "Will you not do so much for yourself?" she said earnestly. "It makes my heart ache for you, to hear you speak so hopelessly. I am younger than you, and we have been kept apart, so that I know nothing of your life except that it has been unhappy. But you who are so beautiful, and who have the gift of making everyone love you, why do you despair? Have pity upon my mother and yourself. Free yourself from the tyranny of this vice—if it be a vice. Let us all go away from Monte Carlo. We will live in some other place as beautiful, where the people are not wicked. For my mother's sake, Varuna!"

"Too late," replied Madame Fano. "My nature is formed.

Character makes its own destiny. I have found nothing in life but weariness and nausea, and I crave for some sort of stimulant. Gambling is that to me. It has become a necessity, and why should I give it up? It injures no one and can make me neither better nor worse than I am. But with you everything is different. You are young, unspoiled. Your future is before you. You will love and marry. Your home will be in England; and you will take my mother away from this feverish, injurious mode of existence, and give her a new starting-point with healthful interests and occupations. As for me, it matters very little what becomes of me. . . . No," arresting Helena's impetuous protest. "There is no use in arguing. You must not pay any attention to my gloomy words. Don't think of me. Think only of yourself. I am not well this evening. I am in low spirits. To-morrow you will see that I am another person. To start a new subject,—how are you impressed by Colonel Cazalette?"

"Oh, why discuss such an utter stranger—to me at least? He seems kind and pleasant; but I have not thought of him."

"He is a person who obliges everyone to think of him. They say that the surest way to prepossess a woman in favour of a man you wish her to dislike, is to warn her against him. Nevertheless I will run the risk, and put you on your guard now against believing too much in Colonel Cazalette. He will try to make love to you."

Helena smiled in sad scorn.

"That would be to very little purpose. You have a wrong impression about me, Varuna. I shall never marry."

"What! so young—only nineteen; and the life's drama played already! Do you know that I am something ef a fortune-teller? Let me see your hand." Helena tendered the pink palm. Varuna scrutinised it for some moments in silence.

"Your lines tell me a story. Not long ago, the man you love asked you to be his wife; and you refused from a mistaken idea of duty. You were wrong. Man and woman existed before creeds. Love is the only lasting religion. Faiths and formulas are empty shadows. Be true to your own heart, and that shall bring you peace. Oh, I can't act to-night. Why keep up the farce? I know what you saw in the garden. There!" She released Helena's hand, and rising, looked down upon the trembling girl. Reared to her full stature, her white robes clinging round her form, her dark eyes dilated, she might have represented a prophetess or sibyl. "Helena," she went on, "a man does not love and forget so easily. He may be led away by a temporary infatuation, but the true heart will never wander for long. George Warrender was yours before he became mine. I give him back to you."

"You are generous," replied Helena with a sarcasm foreign to her nature; "but granting that I was mistaken and miscalculated my strength, I have some pride, and he can hardly be tossed backwards and forwards like a child's plaything. I had no right to suppose that he would remain constant to a dream. I sent him away, and my reason for doing so exists still."

"What! in the face of your knowledge that you love him? Great heavens! I have no patience with such perversity. What do you know of the misery of a loveless marriage—the shame of it—the wickedness of it? If you knew, you would die rather than cast away, for the sake of a chimera, the highest good which can be given to a woman. Perish priests and the confessional. Oh, my God! if at seventeen I had had such a chance of happiness!"

Varuna's passionate words carried her beyond the power of self-control. She buried her face in her hands, and wept unrestrainedly.

Helena sat dumb with inward anguish. Varuna's paroxysm did not last long. Gradually her sobs subsided, and she stood silent, knowing that she had betrayed her true feeling for Warrender, and uncertain as to the effect which her outburst would have upon Helena.

A thousand impulses warred in the breast of each. They were sisters; their cause of trouble was the same. In a manner their hearts yearned towards each other, and yet between them there seemed to have arisen an impassable spiritual barrier, barring any approach to sympathy. The mutual consciousness was too painful. Helena made a movement towards her sister, but a wave of Varuna's hand arrested her. At last she spoke brokenly:

"You are nobler than I. . . . I admire and honour you—but, oh, forgive me if I seem unresponsive. What can I say? The position is unnatural. It is you whom he loves! how could it be otherwise? I have no cause for regret or bitterness. I bade him forget me, and he has done so. There cannot be any question of sacrifice on either side."

Varuna looked steadfastly at her sister. "You must answer me one question truthfully. I think that I have the right to ask it. If the last year could be lived over again, would you still bid him leave you?"

Helena blushed deeply. "Oh, I cannot tell," she faltered, clasping her hands in agitation. "Everything has changed; I am weak, bewildered. I have been visionary; I see it now. Perhaps my judgment was entirely wrong. My mother's presence was a sort of spiritual companionship to me. I felt that she would disapprove of my marrying a Protestant, and that we should be

separated further. . . . And then, I did not think—I did not mean the decision to be quite final. Don't ask me any more questions; they only pain me; talking does no good. God did not intend that I should be happy in that way; nothing can alter the position."

"You are right," answered Varuna. "The position is an unnatural one. The sight of me must be grievous to you, and my mad impulse in speaking out to-night has done no good."

"Yes, it has shown me what a noble woman you are. You make me hate myself; but at least I am thankful that all is open between us. See, I confess that I am bitter and jealous. Only a little while ago I wronged you in my thoughts. I have heard already—or I have fancied—horrible things. It is as though there were a spell about you, or about this place. What is it? This is what I heard in the train to-day between Nice and Monte Carlo—that you fascinate men, and make them play for you, because those who love you always win at first. When the luck changes you turn them away, and sometimes they kill themselves in despair. Is it true? Is this how you have earned your name of the Vampire?"

Varuna uttered an hysterical laugh. "And people say that the nineteenth century is a prosaic age!" she exclaimed. "I suppose that there *is* a sort of evil enchantment about me, for I bring no one any good. I do not try to fascinate men, but I have the misfortune to attract them. It is my coldness which makes them spread evil stories about me. If I were a Mademoiselle Valerie, for instance, there would be no scandal. As for *roulette*, I seldom stake for myself, because if I do I invariably lose. Experience has made me superstitious on the subject: I had better own at once that I am morbidly superstitious. It is true that men who love me usually win. . . . Come, we must not talk any more. If you begin to imagine that you are in a land of spells and sorceries, you will never get to sleep to-night, and you must be in sore need of rest. Good-night, Helena. Do you believe that I am honest, and, after my fashion, loyal?" She held forth her hands wistfully.

"Yes, I do believe in you." Helena clasped the outstretched hands.

"And that I love you? Perhaps I too have cherished illusions, and am now watching them fade. Because we are women, do not let us forget that we are sisters. Now each of us knows the other's heart. To-morrow we will take up our *rôles*, and play our parts bravely. Good-night."

She kissed the pale, wondering girl, and then silently left the room.

Chapter XVI.

farewell.

Early the following morning Warrender received a note from Madame Fano. It was very short:

"I beg that you will look upon what took place as a dream—nothing more. Let our next meeting be upon the first footing of friendship, and till I give you permission, speak no further word of love. In the meantime, will you do me the greatest kindness in your power, and go away from Monte Carlo for a short time? I have strong reasons for making this request, and I know you well enough to feel assured that you will grant the favour for which I most earnestly beg.

"V. F."

Warrender's first impulse was to protest against this dismissal and to insist upon his right to an answer after his declaration of the previous day. At least, he felt himself justified in imploring for another interview. Upon reflection, however, he decided that at present the truest proof of devotion would be literal compliance with her wishes. He wrote more formally than she had done.

"My dear Madame Fano,

"I will do what you require, and will leave Monte Carlo this evening. To obey you is hard indeed; but I think that by thus placing myself at your disposal, I can best convince you that I am yours heart and soul.

"I find it difficult to understand your motive in sending me away, and in forbidding me to speak of what is uppermost in my thoughts. It may be that you fancy there is some reason to doubt the stability of my feelings. I fear that it may be months before you have entire faith in my unchangeable love for you, but I know that the time will come in which you will trust me, as I now trust you.

"Yours always devotedly,

"George Warrender."

In writing the last words, Warrender had no underlying intention of impressing upon Madame Fano the fact that she had committed herself in a manner which should mean everything to a woman. He simply accepted that passionate kiss of yesterday as a proof that she loved him. Her reply as to

whether she would or would not become his wife could not alter his conviction on this point. To doubt would be to insult her in his thoughts. But when Varuna read the letter, her cheeks burned, and she shrank in shame from the recollection it invoked. She determined that should he call before his departure, she would not see him.

His kiss still lingered upon her lips, and she felt that they were consecrated for ever. Few men possess this refined sentiment. For them such love passages have not the deep significance which they present to women. To a woman the first caress of reciprocated passion is the ceremony of initiation into holy mysteries. Marriage has both its exoteric and esoteric meanings. The wife and mother may fulfil her material obligations to the letter, and yet be wedded in soul to another. Faithlessness to this latter bond would be treason to the noblest instincts of her womanhood.

There is a more binding fealty than that sworn at the altar.

When Warrender called that afternoon at the Villa Kilsyth, he was shown into the garden, where he found only Mrs. Kilsyth and Helena. The former apologised for Madame Fano's absence, giving as a reason that she had gone to visit her lame pensioner at Monaco.

Helena was composed, and met her late lover's eyes without blenching. The night, or rather the morning, watches had brought her counsel; and she had the pleasing consciousness that at least she was comporting herself with dignity. She talked to Warrender of Hallingford, of the proceedings of his friends in the county, and of general topics, which they would have discussed a year before. If there were an occasional tremble in her voice, it might naturally have been ascribed to emotion at the sight of one whom she had last met during her uncle's lifetime.

Warrender's announcement of his intended departure from Monte Carlo was received by Helena in silent gratitude, by Mrs. Kilsyth with frank ejaculations of sorrow. Cazalette, who at that moment joined the group, was puzzled to account for a move, inspired he felt certain by Varuna, and obviously to his own advantage.

Mrs. Kilsyth's brain was not equal to analysis of motive. Cazalette's happy adjustment of the difficulties of the situation had completely set her mind at rest concerning the respective futures of her daughters. It was not difficult to conceive Helena romantically attached to Cazalette; and her imagination revelled in the picture of Varuna melted at last, and secure in a bliss which should

atone for all past sorrows. Love was even still a magic word to Mrs. Kilsyth. She had bewailed Varuna's insensibility, and had sighed hitherto in vain for the coming of the prince. Yesterday her bosom had glowed with satisfaction. To-day her hopes sank. It appeared evident that Varuna remained unconquered, and that Warrender was sharing the fate of previous suitors.

She was too *naïve* to conceal her dismay.

"Does Varuna know that you are going to leave us?" she asked abruptly.

Warrender hesitated, and replied evasively, "I had hoped to see Madame Fano this afternoon."

"And the Carnival!" cried Mrs. Kilsyth, "you were to have joined our party."

"I hope to return before the Carnival; if not, we shall meet at Nice."

Mrs. Kilsyth's face brightened. Upon finding that Cannes was his destination, she produced the 'Journal des Etrangers,' and ran over the names of the visitors at that place. She had a caustic observation to make upon each of the notabilities he might meet, and a solemn warning to deliver against a certain hotel, frequented by a set of patriarchal Philistines whom she held in abhorrence; finally, a long list of commissions which she desired that he would execute in Nice. Warrender was upon thorns. He had ascertained that Madame Fano was driving; and his only chance of an interview rested upon his intercepting her at Monaco.

Cazalette conversed aside with Helena; but his eye was upon Warrender, and it was through a clever diversion on his part that the latter was at last enabled to detach himself from Mrs. Kilsyth and take his leave.

Helena was approached last. She had moved a little apart, and now stood, with dreamy eyes looking larger from suppressed tears, and hands folded nervously upon each other, waiting for the ordeal of Warrender's farewell.

He was struck by her exceeding paleness. It aroused in his mind a feeling of mingled pity and alarm, and again that guilty uneasiness. A wave of tenderness, fraternal rather than lover-like, suffused his heart. This was the Helena whom as a child he had caressed and with whose early loneliness and sorrows he had sympathised. Old memories murmured sweetly. He gently pressed the hand which she placed in his.

"I have had no opportunity," he said in a low voice, "of offering you my condolences; but I am sure you know that I have felt deeply for you in your trouble. The sorrow has, however, one compensation, has it not? I know well what the dearest wish of

your heart has been for years. At last it is gratified, and you are with your mother and sister. That must be a happiness to you. Helena—I may still call you so, may I not?"

A moment later he reproached himself bitterly for having uttered the words. Of old, at the mention of her mother, a look of sweet enthusiasm had been wont to illumine her face. Now there was no brightening smile. Her lips quivered; she remained sad and with eyes downcast.

"I think you must know," she began impulsively, and checked herself.

Did he not know? He remembered at this moment, with a feeling akin to remorse, the sense of profanation with which he had at first pictured Helena surrounded by the meretricious accessories of the gambling-rooms. Then he thought of her girlish day-dreams—her romantic devotion to her scarcely known mother and sister—all the visionary hopes by which she had connected them with her future. Her eyes seemed to be mutely reproaching him; they said so plainly—

"My idols are shattered; my temple is empty; and your presence adds poignancy to my disappointment."

"Helena!" he exclaimed, in a tone of such deep pity that the poor girl's heart throbbed wildly as she listened—"forgive me. I can't be conventional when I am reminded of old times, and of what friends we used to be. I do know; I understand, and I am so sorry for you. This is not what you expected. But don't be cast down. Take comfort in thinking of the good you may do your mother. There will come a better time—for us all."

He paused as though wishing to convey more than his words would naturally imply. Helena grasped his meaning and winced inwardly. There ensued a painful silence.

"Good-bye then—for a few weeks only," Warrender said in a more matter-of-fact manner. "I hope that when I come back again you may be looking stronger. And if I can be of any use, you will let me know at the Central Hotel, Cannes. Miss Kilsyth, I may still count upon your friendship, may I not? Will you tell me that I have your good wishes?"

"I wish you well, with my whole heart," she replied earnestly. "Good-bye!"

They shook hands again. Mrs. Kilsyth's cheerful valediction sounded in his ears as he left the villa and made his way towards the peninsula of Monaco.

As he mounted the hill which leads towards the fortress, Lord Bretland accosted him.

"Ha! my dear fellow, what is this I hear about your sudden flight?"

"Only," answered Warrender, affecting an air of cheerful unconcern, "that the Casino bores me, and I am going to try the dull respectability of Cannes by way of variety."

But Lord Bretland pursed up his mouth so comically that Warrender was obliged to laugh, and thus assured himself that, notwithstanding Madame Fano's cruelty, he was far from feeling miserable.

"Ha! I shouldn't have thought it. Talking of boredom, there's that lachrymose septuagenarian Philpotts taking the air yonder in a bath-chair, and watching the gigantic manœuvres of the Monégasque army. He began whining over the flatness of life, and said he missed his friends. I asked him what had become of his friends; for Monte Carlo is not exactly a desert, you know. 'Become of them!' he shouted, glaring at me as if I had insulted him. 'Why, d—n them, they're all dead!' Funny wasn't it? Do you know who I have just been talking to, and questioning about your movements—of which, by the way, she professed an ignorance—incompatible, my dear fellow, with the aspect of affairs of late?"

"Mrs. Featherstone?"

"Nonsense! Madame Fano. I sallied forth to the Monaco gardens this morning in search of inspiration, with the idea of composing my poem upon, *The Magician, the Prince and the Vampire*. Do you remember our little talk the day of your arrival here? Is the riddle too hard; or is it a case of complications? I think that I might engage to square that sweet saint Helena——"

"Excuse me," interrupted Warrender, "but I should be glad to say good-bye to Madame Fano, if you can tell me where to find her."

Lord Bretland waved his hand in the direction of the point, and Warrender proceeded hastily thither.

Mrs. Kilsyth's pretty pony-carriage, with its jingling bells and cockaded groom, was waiting at the curve, and was an indication of Madame Fano's whereabouts. Warrender sought her on that fairy-like terrace to which she had introduced him on the morning of the New Year. She was alone—restlessly pacing the narrow platform. Now she paused and appeared lost in thought. Her veil was raised, and he beheld her pale profile clear against the smalt blue of sea and sky. From his vantage point above he could perceive that the night had worked ravages. Her features seemed sharpened, and dark orbits had been hollowed round her eyes.

Certain vague forebodings, which during his vigils had alternated with tumultuous joy, deepened into a defined dread. He knew that she had been wrestling with the passion which yesterday had mastered her, and that she repented having given him the assurance of her love. Yet, he felt, that in her nature was a grand generosity which would prompt her to give or withhold absolutely. Whatever reason she might have for avoiding him, its root did not lie in coquetry.

His own feelings were so mixed that of none could he be certain, save of his passionate longing to make her his own. Melancholy succeeded exultation. A weird suggestion rising in his mind as he gazed at her—that he might have become the victim of an unholy enchantment—made him smile grimly and withdraw his eyes. His over-excited imagination wrought strange vagaries. The very scene became unreal, and far on the southern horizon the weird clouds seemed to shape themselves fantastically into serpentine and Melusina-like forms.

A start, a mental leap backward to reality. Yet, impossible to subdue that faint sense of guilt, or to banish regretful memories which had been steeped in the intoxication of late weeks.

But the mere anticipation of touching Varuna's hand thrilled his nerves, and life seemed narrowed to the sensation of the moment.

He approached her.

She looked up as his step sounded upon the rock. A world of unspoken thought lay between them; and she stood, shy, full of troubled consciousness, avoiding his ardent gaze. He had clasped both her hands in his, but she gently withdrew them.

"I have been to the villa," he said reproachfully. "And you knew that I should be there, and yet would not give me the joy of seeing you. But I have found you; and it is better here. What have I done that I should be treated so harshly?"

"You insist then upon saying good-bye! It is foolish of you. Good-byes are so cruel—like looking upon the face of the dead. Last impressions are those which linger longest. Why carry away one that must be painful? Now all the time that you are absent, you will think of me as I look to-day—at my worst—instead of at my best and brightest."

His heart bounded. Her words were a confession; and yet she spoke in the deepest sadness.

"I am glad! I am glad!" he exclaimed. "Though you send me away, there is comfort in feeling that you are sorry. You are sorry—are you not?"

"Yes, I am sorry," she answered gently.

"I want no other picture of you than this," he continued.

"This is the one which I shall keep in my memory. There's a different expression on your face to-day to any I have ever seen it wear."

"I have changed then?"

"Oh yes," and he added with audacious tenderness—"greatly since yesterday."

Madame Fano blushed deeply. "It is ungenerous of you to remind me of what I wish forgotten. Remember, there is one forbidden subject . . . . And you are really going away this evening. Thank you for doing so readily what I ask."

"How long must I remain away from you?" said Warrender eagerly. "I want to show you that I am entirely yours to be disposed of as you please. Whatever I may think of your reasons I will respect them. But I beseech you do not be harder upon me than is necessary."

"You acknowledge then that you deserve a little severity?" she answered wistfully. "I did not wish to see you because I was afraid that you would ask for explanations, and I can give you none now."

"You wish to gain time for thought?"

She bowed her head.

"Tell me. Is it of yourself that you are uncertain, or of me?"

"Of both perhaps—but do not question me."

"I will be silent, I will patiently endure my exile—submit to any conditions you impose. But don't condemn me to suffer tortures of doubt. I would serve for you as Jacob served for Rachel, if I might but hear from your lips that you loved me."

"You mistake the position," said Varuna coldly. "I exact nothing. Forget only what you said to me yesterday. Since it is a sacrifice to leave Monte Carlo, I withdraw my request."

"Ah!" he cried vehemently, "you are disingenuous, and I believed that from you I might always count upon sincerity."

She looked deeply pained.

"I have the right to a reply," he continued, pressing his advantage. "It is not in my power nor do I wish to forget what was uttered out of the fulness of my heart."

"Very well then," she answered impulsively. "If I *must* be true to you, I will confess that I care for you."

"My darling!" he exclaimed.

"No. You must not speak like that. You must not say another word of love to me. You *must*, when you come back, if you cannot forget, at least ignore, all that wild talk of yesterday."

"Are you trying to put my love to the test?" he asked. "If so, I warn you that it is waste of time. Or are you so proud that

you do not value a heart which was once offered to your sister, and rejected?"

"Not very long ago," said Madame Fano calmly, "I pledged myself to help you to be happy as far as lay in my power; I mean to fulfil that pledge; but in my own way, not in yours."

"Which means——"

"That I am not acting from vanity or from any petty, selfish motives. You will believe this. If I keep you in suspense, I am in suspense also. I am troubled and perplexed. When you have gone, I shall be able to judge more clearly between conflicting claims."

"Oh, what has reason to do with the matter, or duty either? Can there be any claim stronger than that of love. Our hearts spoke yesterday."

"We were carried away by the feeling of the moment. I was ill, unnerved; and you—you were so impulsive. . . . I grow hot when I think of it all. I who so prided myself upon my dignity. And now there is one man in the world who has a right to think cheaply of me."

"God knows!" he answered earnestly, "that in my love for you, I bring you the worship and reverence of my soul."

"You think so—now. There's a kind of love which burns up suddenly like a spirit flame; and then, simply goes out. And there's another sort which may lie smouldering during a lifetime, but can never be extinguished. It is my misfortune to create, in most cases, desperate but short-lived attachments. Mr. Warrender, our relations with each other have been quite unconventional from the first. I have allowed myself to be so dependent upon you that the position has become strained and unnatural. The only way in which we can get back to frank and friendly intercourse is by being apart for a time. After your return, I insist upon your treating me merely as an acquaintance—or friend, if you like that word better—at least for a time."

"That is impossible. I will regulate my manner according to your directions; but my thoughts—you might as well order me not to breathe as order me to think of you in any but one way. You are my life. You make my world. Night and day I long for you. Ah, Varuna, they say truly that you are cold as ice. Oh, how I wish that you were more impulsive!"

"Do you not see that I am torn in two," said Varuna impetuously. "If I were to act upon impulse I would decide the question this moment and would tell you that what you wish is quite impossible. But I want to be just to you and to myself;

and so I temporise. I have seen the harm which has come from ill-considered self-sacrifice. . . . Now, I have said too much. You see that I am quite unfit to talk to you. Be good to me—you have been more than good hitherto—and leave me for the present."

The appeal stirred every chivalrous feeling in Warrender's breast.

"I will go. But you will forgive me if I put forth one more plea. It does not need any reply. You spoke of ill-considered self-sacrifice. I cannot guess in the least what is in your mind—unless you have some wild notion that your sister—— But that is impossible. It was settled long ago. Varuna, I implore you, don't let any false ideas of duty wreck our lives. Your sorrows have unhinged your imagination, and have let loose a crowd of morbid fancies. You have told me that my influence has done you good. If this be so, think how much sweeter your life might be with my devoted love to shield you from everything hurtful."

She raised her hands imploringly. "I know—ah do I not know! Whatever happens, you will have made me a better woman. God bless and keep you! And now good-bye."

"As you will. One more moment. You have not yet told me how long my exile must last."

She appeared to consider. "Till after the Carnival; come back when that is over. You will find us still here."

"You will write to me?"

"Oh no. What good would that do?"

"Friends write to each other," he pleaded.

"Our position is anomalous. We are neither friends nor lovers."

"And there is *nothing* I may take with me—no pledge—no word of tenderness?"

"It is best not." Suddenly she raised his hand and pressed it to her lips.

"Your happiness is very dear to me," she said falteringly. "Always remember this. Farewell."

Motioning him to remain on the terrace, she quitted his side, and ascended the stone staircase. He disobeyed the mute command, and followed her slowly to the upper platform. Thence, he watched her get into her carriage and drive down the Condamine incline towards Monte Carlo.

Chapter XVII.

"IF I COULD SHOW YOU A MEANS."

The cause of agitation removed, life at Villa Kilsyth, taking into consideration the exciting elements which compose the moral atmosphere of Monaco, proceeded with comparative evenness.

Madame Fano presented to the world her usual indifferent, enigmatic demeanour, and if she suffered in secret, the evidence of wakeful nights and silent tears was only to be detected in the worn look her face assumed when in repose, in her more frequent fits of abstraction, and the greater show of recklessness with which she plunged into tho feverish dissipation of the Casino.

It was a curious fact that, since Warrender's departure, luck had gone steadily against her. Adorers staked in vain. She herself laid down notes wildly, and lost large sums. Mrs. Kilsyth lamented adverse influences, and redoubled her religious exercises. The croupiers smiled significantly when the enchantress left the tables with empty purse. It appeared that the spell was broken at last.

Helena Kilsyth lived in a world of her own, far removed from these perturbing interests. Her inner life flowed in a current unobservable by spectators. She occupied herself with books, music, and painting, attended regularly the services of her Church, and made long excursions into the neighbouring country, accompanied by her maid, or by her mother and Colonel Cazalette, when the former was able to tear herself from the baleful attractions of the Casino.

In Colonel Cazalette's society she always found pleasure. The tinge of mysticism which coloured his conversation exercised a charm upon the enthusiastic girl, and he affected all that devotional sentimentality which lends so much glamour to the practice of Roman Catholicism. He was old enough, and his prestige was sufficient to inspire her with respect, and to pique her curiosity, while his subtly conveyed admiration flattered her innocent vanity. His abstinence from play, and the fact, upon which Mrs. Kilsyth dwelt eloquently, of his having brought back her straying feet into the paths of religion, caused Helena to regard him as her mother's good genius, if not her saviour. In their confidential talks, and these of late had become numerous, he would touch delicately upon Mrs. Kilsyth's passion for play, and upon the desirability of removing her from Monaco. He alluded, with a

self-command which did him credit, to the attachment of Varuna and Warrender, giving Helena to understand that he was aware of her rejection of the latter; and thus smilingly ignoring any pain which his words might inflict. Helena writhed inwardly, and yet felt grateful for the covert sympathy which Cazalette contrived to infuse into his manner—sympathy which he was careful should appear grounded upon the delicate complications of the situation, and not upon any suspicion of partiality upon her side towards the Englishman.

Poor Helena was troubled and bewildered. She felt certain that Varuna had sent her lover away in an impulse of heroic self-sacrifice; and all her pride and unselfishness revolted against the position in which she was thus placed. Between herself and her sister, though outwardly their relations appeared affectionate and unembarrassed, there had arisen a wall of reserve. Either would have scorned the idea of jealousy. The heart of each one yearned towards the other, and yet bitterness and repulsion, stronger perhaps because unacknowledged, held them apart. Helena knew not, that often during the dark hours Varuna would listen at her door, and then hurry away, shuddering at the sound of suppressed sobs; and Varuna, in her turn, was unconscious that her sister's eyes noted the darker shades beneath her own, and that every mournful look, every reckless speech, was a dagger-thrust in Helena's heart.

The confessions which had been made in Helena's room the night of the latter's arrival, were by tacit understanding absolutely ignored; and Warrender's name was never mentioned, except in the most casual manner.

As regards Cazalette, Madame Fano seemed to have forgotten her warning, or was unaware of the frequency of his visits. This was most probable, for his calls were timed at the hours when Varuna frequented the Casino, or was absent upon her solitary expeditions to her pensioners at Monaco and Roquebrune.

Nothing could have been managed with more admirable tact. Mrs. Kilsyth had her cue; and if ever a doubt crossed her mind, it was dispelled by the remembrance of a late large loan which Cazalette had made her, and which had staved off certain pressing creditors.

Thus, the weeks glided on. Spring had come. Sea and sky reflected each other. Sunbeams leaped up like diamonds from the waves. The willows had put forth shoots. Grey walls were ablaze with mesembryanthemum. The black shadows beneath the olives were anemone-spangled. Jonquils and narcissus filled the air with fragrance; and the tea-roses were in glorious bloom. King

Carnival was about to commence his brief reign. But upon the very day of his inauguration, as Mrs. Kilsyth and Madame Fano were upon the point of starting for Nice, a telegram arrived for the latter from the principal of the establishment where her child was placed, announcing that the little girl was dangerously ill.

The rush of maternal impulse swept all else away. Varuna dropped her domino; threw aside her bouquets of violets; stifled the wild joy which she had felt at the mere thought of perhaps catching a glimpse of Warrender among the crowd upon the Corso; and set off by the next train for Italy.

* * * * * *

There are few more effectual anodynes to gnawing regret than the air of a spring day upon the Riviera!

It is apt to affect in a peculiar fashion temperaments of the fervid, melancholic type. In them it produces a curious combination of dreaminess and exhilaration—a condition in which all that is said and thought has an irresistible tendency to become arabesque; feelings, images and ideas gliding into each other, leaving a vague sensation of well being, tempered by a not disagreeable sadness.

Thus, with Helena upon a certain March morning.

A small expedition had been organised to Nice by way of La Turbie. Colonel Cazalette and Mrs. Kilsyth had private reasons for proposing the excursion. Mrs. Featherstone was perfectly well aware of its object, but was understood to be interested in some diamond and emerald beetles of new and startling design exhibiting in the Rue Masséna. Her suspicions on the subject of Warrender's attentions to Madame Fano, his sudden flight, and its coincidence with Helena's arrival, strengthened by what she had gleaned as to his former intimacy at Hallingford, stimulated her curiosity and made her anxious to assist at the *dénoûment*. Helena had expressed a desire to see the Trophy of Augustus and the view from the heights, while Lord Bretland and Mr. Vereker, the innocent young Englishman, were naturally in attendance, and completed the party.

General Featherstone was still seeking musical inspiration at San Remo. In one of his late letters to his wife he had mentioned having found a congenial companion in George Warrender. The latter had returned to Monte Carlo at the close of the Carnival week; and after calling at the Villa Kilsyth, had the next day proceeded, ostensibly along the Italian coast. In fact, he had branched off, and in the hope of seeing Madame Fano had followed her to Milan. His absence favoured Cazalette's

designs, and was a relief to Helena. The girl was doing her best to conquer sorrow, and submit to circumstances which she could not but acknowledge had been brought about by her own course of action. That interview at Hallingford was irrevocable. She had had no right to build hopes upon her lover's constancy. To-day, sunshine and balmy breezes assuaged her yearning, and her being expanded in the atmosphere of geniality and affection by which she was encompassed. Her mother was unusually placid and caressing. Cazalette's manner was at once protective and reverential; even the languid, semi-paternal jocularity of Lord Bretland, who occupied the fourth seat in the landau, exercised a soothing effect upon her nerves.

The carriage bowled along the lovely Cornice road, so unique in its contrasts of tended beauty and desolation.

On one side, the seamed, barren heights, cairns of volcanic-looking stones, huge tawny boulders, steep cliffs, indented and streaked with long black lines, or stretches of lichen-grown, lentiscus-studded wilderness, with here and there a stunted pine or dwarfed carruba-tree casting its dark shadow upon the grey ground. On the other, a sloping landscape of orange groves, vineyards, villas and gardens, Monte Carlo gleaming gem-like below; wind and sunlight silvering the quivering olive leaves; green of ilex, blending with more sombre green of firs; and stretching far to the horizon the white-crested sea flecked with sails, like the wings of birds in flight. Farther, the isolated crag and human eyrie of Eza, rising needle-like in the hollow of surrounding hills; and away north-westward, range after range of mountains, those near, brown and bare; the more distant ones hazy purple, till far off, the dazzling snow-clad summits of the Alpes Maritimes closed in the landscape.

They had left La Turbie, and conversation had become rather tentative than sustained or brilliant. It glided from the present to the past. "If one could only leap back eighteen hundred years or so," said Lord Bretland slowly, removing his cigarette as he spoke, "and enlighten the ancient Gauls and Britons about the wonders of the present day! Those old Romans, practical fellows in the matter of building walls and bridges, would be worth talking to. Just imagine the interest Julius Cæsar, with his fondness for making roads, would have taken in the construction of the Great Western Railway for instance, to say nothing of the Mont Cenis or the Channel Tunnel. There must have been considerably more zest in life in those days. It always strikes me that our vaunted progress is bringing us to the fag end of sensation. The organ of wonder will soon have become extinct except in the

race of 'Arries, which mobs Royalty and stares down professional beauties. Ye-es. Don't you think so?"

"Oh!" replied Cazalette. "We measure the past far too rapidly. One is apt to mark time by its wars and crises, and to forget the days of dull inaction. We don't realise how bored we should have felt when communication was limited and locomotion difficult."

"Tell me what age you would choose if you had to live in the past," asked Helena.

"What should you say to the time of Leonardo da Vinci, when Italian art was at its zenith?" he answered with his gentle smile.

"Doesn't your first remark apply to art also?" said Lord Bretland, taking a long whiff with eyes but half unclosed. "We gauge the capacities of an age by the masterpieces which have floated, and forget the number of wrecks that would have sunk had art been a fashion then as now. There's too much of it in this century: one wearies of the jargon. Then a man painted because genius or inspiration prompted. But even the excellence of the past is overrated. People are in the habit of comparing a one year's exhibition of the Royal Academy with the collections of Rome and Florence; naturally they decide that the old masters are superior; but let us choose five of the best pictures out of the Academy for say a hundred years, and then make the comparison. I believe the advantage would be upon our side. What do you say, Miss Helena?"

"No," replied Helena. "It is more than a question of technique. There would be wanting the animating fervour. The Spirit of God was more with men in the middle ages. No modern artist could paint one of the old Madonnas."

A company of mounted *gendarmerie* in their blue braided uniforms and cocked hats rode by, and stopped to drink at a red-tiled cabaret perched upon the side of the hill. Sallow children with great black eyes ran by the carriage, holding up bouquets of roses and anemones. The Paillon, its sandy bed a mosaic of garments set forth to dry, the scene enlivened by the *blanchisseuses* with their blue skirts and crimson kerchiefs, wound zig-zag down to the sea. They were approaching Nice.

Then followed breakfast at the Réserve, and some desultory wanderings along the Promenade des Anglais, and shopping on the part of Mrs. Featherstone and Mrs. Kilsyth. As they loitered in the gardens listening to the band, the former drew Helena aside. "Pray tell me, does Mr. Warrender intend to waylay Madame Fano at San Remo, or is it you who have driven him away from Monte Carlo? Ah, Miss Kilsyth, there is no use

in trying to look unconscious; we all know that a man's heart is most easily caught on the rebound. Forgive me," she added with a look of frank appeal which could not be resented. "Of course I'm impertinent; but I feel certain there is a little complication here which might be smoothed out. I should just like to tell you the story of my own marriage. Perhaps you would not suspect that I love my old General dearly; but it's true, though I do amuse myself after my own fashion. The fact is, that he was first of all engaged to my sister. I went in for politics in those days, and had gone for a trip with my father, who was Delegate at an Intercolonial Conference. As soon as ever I came home and appeared on the scene, we fell in love with each other. He had made a mistake. People do sometimes—in the first instance—never in the second. Everybody was so high-souled and heroic, that through sheer misunderstanding and perversity we were nearly all three vowing ourselves to celibacy and perpetual misery. A dear old uncle of mine solved the difficulty by getting Edward and me up to his station and sending for the parson. We went back married, and not such a long time after my sister settled down quite comfortably and happily with a squatter in the Riverina district. There are women who can console themselves, and there are others who can't. Now I'm pretty positive that Madame Fano is one of the last kind."

Helena made no reply. Somewhat abashed by her serious dignity, the little Australian created a happy diversion.

"Colonel Cazalette," she cried. "The ponies are just a little more than I can manage. I wish, if Miss Kilsyth is willing, that you would drive her home in my carriage and give us your places. Remember, we are to halt at Roquebrune."

This proposal being seconded by Mrs. Kilsyth, the change was made. Mr. Featherstone's ponies were spirited and fleet: thus on the homeward drive Cazalette and Helena found themselves some distance in advance of their companions.

She leaned back thoughtful and unhappy. Mrs. Featherstone's words had set painful chords vibrating. He respected her mood, and except for an occasional disjointed remark upon the scenery, there was silence between them till they had almost reached Roquebrune.

At last he said:

"Miss Kilsyth, I am sure that you are meditating some difficult question. It pains me so to see you troubled. You are too young to be weighted with life's burdens. Perhaps I understand your position better than you think. Is there no way in which I could help you?"

"I have been wondering," she answered slowly, "if it would be possible for me to go away for a time."

"To leave Monte Carlo! Well, I am not surprised at your wish. But in that case your mother and Madame Fano would naturally accompany you."

"I want to go alone," said Helena impulsively. "If it were possible I would return to England. But strange as it may seem, I have few intimate friends there, not one whom I would ask to receive me."

"Yes, that does appear wonderful; but the cause is easy to guess. You were brought up a Catholic among Protestants."

"It is my lot," said Helena mournfully, "to be out of harmony with my surroundings, and a source of sorrow and division among those who love me."

"No," answered Cazalette, looking at her earnestly. "You don't know what lies in your power; and the blessings you may confer upon those to whom you are dearest. I am a close observer, Miss Kilsyth, and I am in Madame Fano's confidence. This may surprise you; and it is fair to add that circumstances rather than her own impulse forced her to be unreserved. I can enter into your doubts, your difficulties and your uncertainty as regards your feelings, which towards your sister, for instance, must be strangely contradictory."

"The strongest feeling I have towards my sister is admiration for her nobility of mind."

"You are right. It is a grand nature warped by evil influences. But you would not be outdone in self-sacrifice."

"There is no question of sacrifice—on my part—but of necessity," replied Helena, faltering painfully.

"Nevertheless you feel yourself, with or without reason, a stumbling-block in Madame Fano's path. Some strained notion of honour or generosity forbids her to accept a joy at—she fancies—a cost to you. You cannot mend matters by leaving this place for a time. The struggle would at best only be protracted. But, if I could show you a means by which all Madame Fano's scruples would be removed, and the happiness of several people—I trust also, nay, I am certain, your own, assured——"

"How? Tell me in what way I might do all this?" exclaimed Helena with an incredulous smile.

Cazalette checken the ponies.

"See, we are at Roquebrune already. The others are still far behind. Let me take you to the old fortress. There we shall find a quiet nook where we can sit down and talk."

The carriage had drawn up at the quaint little *place*, where,

under the budding trees, a pair of withered crones sat winding hemp at a wheel, and a group of tall, dark-eyed women, their sleek heads picturesquely tired with gold pins, were playing with their children in the sunshine.

Cazalette helped Helena to alight, gave the horses into the groom's charge, and after addressing some remarks in patois to the women, and tossing a few centimes to the children, led his companion through the dark, narrow streets of the little town.

It was scarcely more than a human rabbit warren, yet with all the picturesqueness of a mediæval town. Rude steps cut in the rock mounted upwards, and labyrinthine passages were lost in shadow. Here were queer winding staircases, and grotesque gables and foundations dating back to Saracenic times. The tiny windows seemed bored in the stone, and every now and then they came upon a niche in the old grey wall, in which stood a weather-worn image of the Virgin—flower decorated, and before which burned a flickering light.

The church doors were open; a bell was softly tinkling, and from under the archway of a house near came the subdued sound of chanting. A line of peasants had assembled on each side of the narrow by-way and were waiting on their knees while the procession of the Host filed by. At its head walked a white-haired priest. He smiled kindly upon Cazalette and the English girl, as they kneeled at his approach. The scene was quaint and solemnising. The procession entered the church. The peasants rose, and the street became again empty. Cazalette and Helena passed on.

He dismissed with a present of money the little girls, who in a patois of mingled French and Italian pressed upon him their services as guides. Leading Helena over the stones he made his way to the ruined tower, whence they looked down upon the quaintly tiled roof-tops, the shelving hill-side with its changing foliage of olives and vines, and far across the sea, towards the distant Corsican coast.

Helena seated herself upon a stone projectieg from the broken wall, while Cazalette, his elbows resting upon the parapet, stood for several moments silently watching her. There was melancholy, resolve, something of faint inquiry in the expression of his face. She, glancing up, felt that a crisis was imminent. For the first time a suspicion of his intentions dawned upon her mind, and she quailed beneath his gaze.

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